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16 EXTRA PAGES INSIDE!

COUNTRY WEEKLY

THE INSIDE STORIES ON COUNTRY MUSIC'S HOTTEST STARS
MARCH 9, 2015



THE HIGHWAYMEN

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**WAYLON
JENNINGS**

**KRIS
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**JOHNNY
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new video
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OF THE
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MY ROOTS

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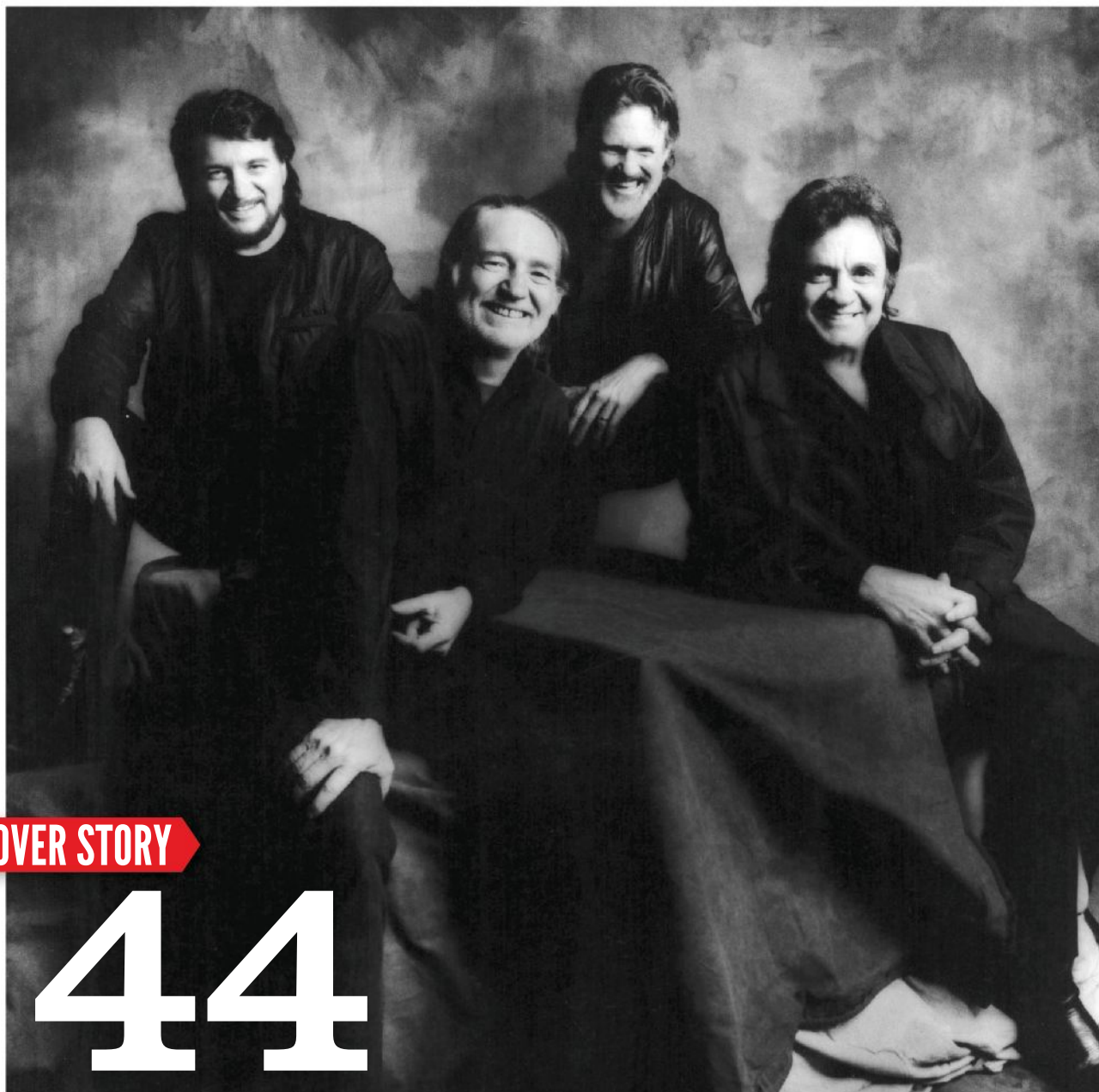
GUTS-GLORY



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COVER STORY

44

The Highwaymen

They formed country music's first supergroup, a Mount Rushmore of country bards and bad dudes—Willie Nelson, Johnny Cash, Waylon Jennings and Kris Kristofferson. They called themselves The Highwaymen, and we celebrate 30 years of their legacy and everlasting influence.

24 | Terri Clark

Walk a mile in her running shoes as she trains for the Country Music ½ Marathon.

50 | Ronnie Milsap

His new exhibit at the Country Music Hall of Fame features rare photos and some wild costumes.

54 | Parmalee

The North Carolina band takes

you behind the scenes of their traveling road show.

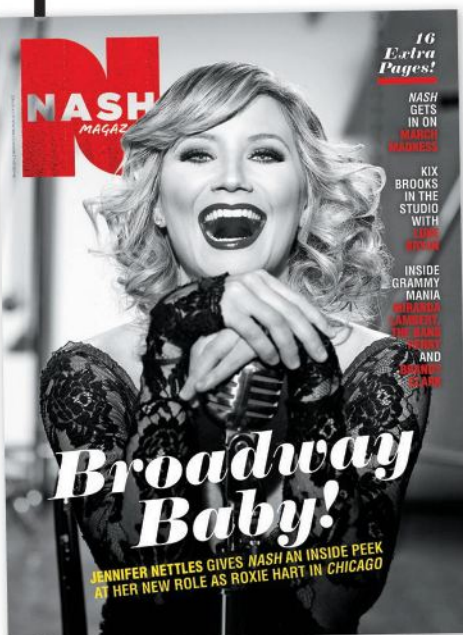
60 | Cole Swindell

No problem getting co-stars for his new video—he just summoned his fans.

62 | Leroy Van Dyke

He once opened for Marilyn Monroe, but the singer's ultimate highlight is the record-setting "Walk On By."

HIGHWAYMEN: COURTESY COUNTRY MUSIC HALL OF FAME; CLARK: COURTESY WMG; SWINDELL: COURTESY CBS; VAN DYKE: COURTESY ENTERTAINMENT



27 NASH

Jennifer Nettles continues to polish her impressive résumé with a stint on the stage, portraying Roxie Hart in a revival of the award-winning musical *Chicago*. Jennifer talks about the challenges of taking on the iconic role. And you'll want to get in on the action with our version of March Madness, complete with brackets.



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Miranda Lambert's MuttNation fundraiser was another doggone success; more festivals announce their star-studded lineups.

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Will Hoge.

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[LETTERS]

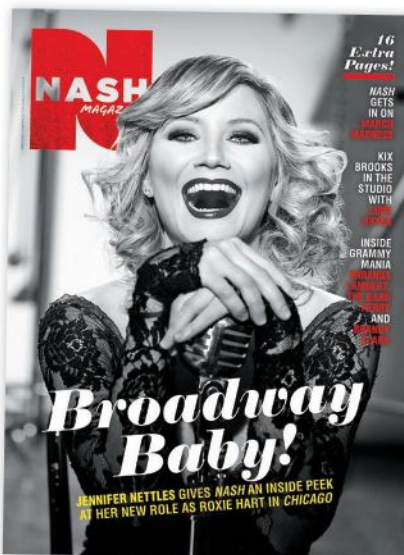


Dear Readers:

Thirty years ago, a new sound was born when four of country music's most famous outlaws—**JOHNNY CASH**, **KRIS KRISTOFFERSON**, **WILLIE NELSON** and **WAYLON JENNINGS**—got together to form **THE HIGHWAYMEN**. Although they only made three studio albums' worth of music together, their impact was felt across the country music world.

Today, their sound still resonates, and for many country artists, The Highwaymen are counted among their top influences. In this cover story, we take a look at the four legends, how their union formed and what their legacy means today.

In this week's *NASH*, we head on over to Broadway, where **JENNIFER NETTLES** is taking the stage. The singer is making her musical theater debut as Roxie Hart in *Chicago* and Jennifer lets us in on her experience. We go to the Grammy Awards for all the winners and excitement, **KIX BROOKS** talks with **LUKE BRYAN** about his 13-year-old nephew and we pit 16 country stars against each other, for your voting pleasure, in our own March Madness event. All this and more in the pages of *NASH*.



See you next week!

LISA KONICKI, Editor in Chief

Tell Us What YOU Think!

MAIL: Letters, *Country Weekly*,
506 2nd Ave. South, Suite 200, Nashville, TN 37210.

SEND E-MAIL TO: letters@countryweekly.com

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ANNIVERSARY SPECIAL

I wanted to let you know how much I appreciated the article on Joey+Rory ["True Faith," Jan. 26]. My husband and I have liked them since we first saw them on *Can You Duet*. We always wanted to see them in concert but did not get the chance. However, in October 2014, we went to Nashville to celebrate our sixth anniversary. We knew that they had a meal house (Marcy Jo's) that serves great food and sometimes you might catch a glimpse of Joey, working alongside Marcy, Rory's sister. So we drove all the way out to their place one morning. Joey was working that day and we briefly chatted with her. She is so down-home and friendly, and that is what both of them are like. They live their lives with great love for each other, their new baby, family and God. After all that she has been through in 2014, she could not have been any nicer. Thank you for the article and pictures.

— **COLLEEN RICHARDSON**
Blairsville, Ga.

REDHEADS UNITE

Reba deserves that [American Country Countdown] Icon Award ["The Year of Reba," Jan 26]. She puts others first and has some of the most uplifting songs. She is truly an angel of God brought here to be an excellent role model for the world. She's full of charity. Her voice and songs help me deal with my epilepsy, which I had brain surgery for. I listen to Reba every day. Even if she wasn't a redhead, she would still have a natural shine-glow on her. I'm proud to be a red-head like her. Love ya, Reba.

— **RAVEN GOODMAN**
Glenwood, Iowa

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COUNTRY WEEKLY

THE INSIDE STORIES ON COUNTRY MUSIC'S HOTTEST STARS

[THE BIG PICTURE]



SHOW STEALER

Anyone asking, "Who is Brandy Clark?" before the Grammy Awards got a perfect introduction when she sang "Hold My Hand" with Dwight Yoakam.



the mix

ALL YOU WANT TO KNOW ABOUT THE STARS OF COUNTRY—AND THEN SOME!

For the latest music news,
go to **COUNTRYWEEKLY.COM**

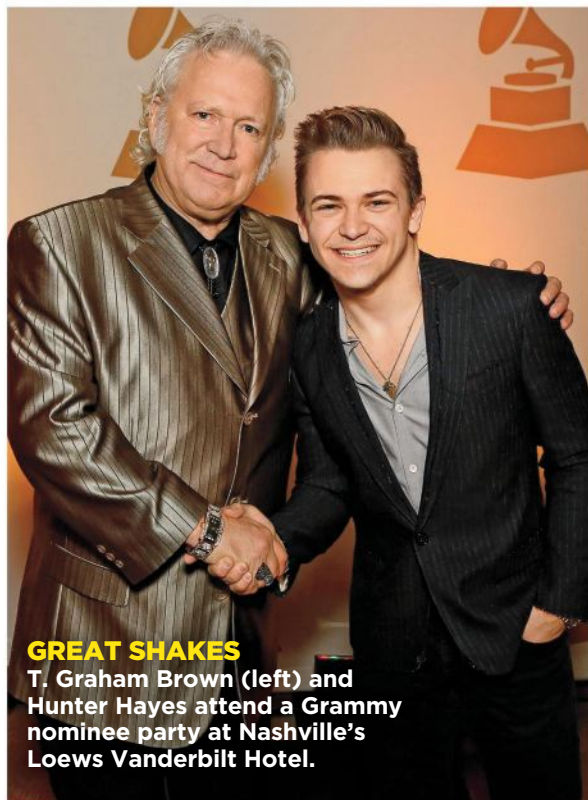


Check, Please

LUKE BRYAN will perform his seventh—and last—spring break concert series on March 11 and 12 in Panama City Beach, Fla. The reigning CMA Entertainer of the Year's free shows will coincide with the release of his final spring break EP, *Spring Break . . . Checkin' Out*, on March 10.

PHOTO BY LOUROCCO/ABC

HOT SHOTS!



GREAT SHAKES

T. Graham Brown (left) and Hunter Hayes attend a Grammy nominee party at Nashville's Loews Vanderbilt Hotel.



SEEING RED

Star Jones (left) and Laura Bell Bundy are a pair of hearts at 12th annual Woman's Day Red Dress Awards in New York City.

Introducing

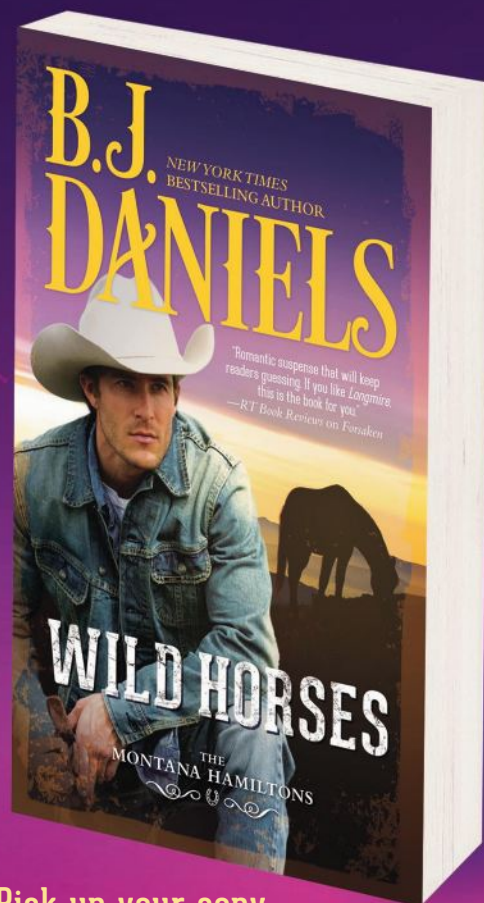
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MUTTNATION SENSATION



If we had tails, they'd be wagging! **MIRANDA LAMBERT** is celebrating another milestone for her MuttNation Foundation 50 States/50 Shelters initiative. In January, the organization distributed a total of \$206,000 (with a minimum donation of \$3,000) to shelters across the country. And the foundation got a nice bump from Ram trucks, which auctioned off a custom Ram 1500 Laramie Longhorn with proceeds benefiting our four-legged friends. In the past seven years, Miranda and mom Bev, who co-founded MuttNation, have raised more than \$2 million to aid in the education of pet owners on responsible care and to create awareness of animal cruelty and neglect.

FESTIVAL LINEUPS

Summer's buzzing with a host of music festivals, and a couple of the largest extravaganzas have updated their lineups. The **PEACH MUSIC FESTIVAL**, now in its fourth year in Scranton, Pa., will include performances from **WILLIE NELSON & FAMILY**, **OLD CROW MEDICINE SHOW** and **GREGG ALLMAN**, among many others. The festival runs Aug. 13-16.



COUNTRY THUNDER in Florence, Ariz., April 9-12, will feature headliners **BLAKE SHELTON** and **LUKE BRYAN**, one week before the two stars co-host the Academy of Country Music Awards. Also bringing the heat are **BRETT ELDRIDGE**, **BIG & RICH**, **DUSTIN LYNCH**, **JOE NICHOLS** and several other acts.

Musical Notes

IN MEMORY

JOE B. MAULDIN, best known as the double



bassist for Buddy Holly's band The Crickets, died on Feb. 7 of cancer in Nashville

at age 74. Joe also became a prominent recording engineer.

ROD MCKUEN, a renowned poet and song-

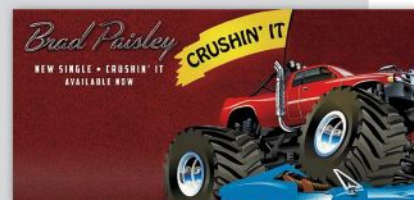


writer, died on Jan. 29 after suffering from pneumonia at age 81.

His songs were recorded by such country stars as Johnny Cash and Waylon Jennings, and he appeared on *The Johnny Cash Show* in 1970, performing his song "Jean," a hit on the pop charts.

TOURS

BRAD PAISLEY will kick off his *Crushin' It* World Tour on May 15 in Philadelphia. The tour features opening acts **JUSTIN MOORE** and **MICKEY GUYTON** and is slated to run through Oct. 3 in West Palm Beach, Fla.



STUCK IN THE MIDDLE WITH STU

You might not have realized it, but March 7 is **MIDDLE NAME PRIDE DAY**. We have a Mann, Samuel, Joseph, John, Leigh (and a Lee), Dawn, Ann, two Michaels and a Newman in our offices, but we stretched out to see what was “stuck in the middle” of our favorite country stars’ names. And here ya go!



Tyler
LYNN
Farr

Miranda
LEIGH
Lambert



Carrie
MARIE
Underwood

Keith
LIONEL
Urban



Thomas
LUTHER
Bryan

Reba
NELL
McEntire



Troyal
GARTH
Brooks



Kenneth
ERIC
Church

Blake
TOLLISON
Shelton



Shawn
RANDOLPH
Houser

Jason
ALDINE
Williams



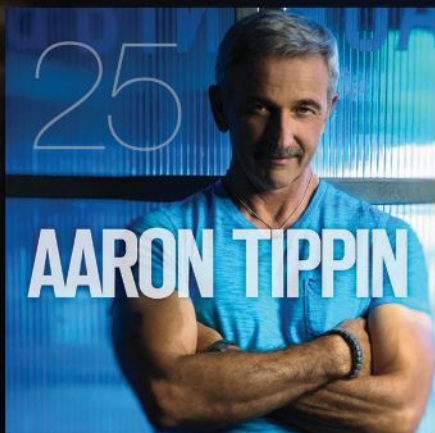
Dolly
REBECCA
Parton

Joshua
RYAN
Owen



Leon
ERIC
Brooks

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MARCH 3



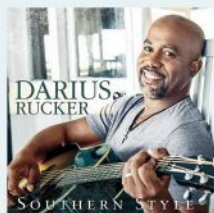
SHANIA TWAIN
Shania: Still the One
Live From Vegas

MARCH 10



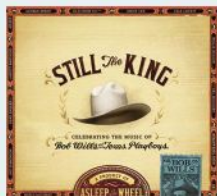
LUKE BRYAN
Spring Break . . .
Checkin' Out

MARCH 31



DARIUS RUCKER
Southern Style

MARCH 17



ASLEEP AT THE WHEEL
Still the King: Celebrating
the Music of Bob Wills and
His Texas Playboys



ALLISON MOORER
Down to Believing



SARAH GAYLE MEECH
Tennessee Love Song

MARCH 24



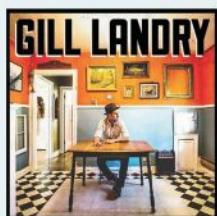
RYAN CULWELL
Flatlands



STRIKING MATCHES
Nothing but the Silence



VARIOUS
NOW That's What I Call
the ACM Awards 50 Years



GILL LANDRY
Gill Landry



CANAAN SMITH
Canaan Smith EP



WILLIAM ELLIOTT WHITMORE
Radium Death

APRIL 7



CAROLINE SPENCE
Somehow



FEUFOLLET
Two Universes



KRISTIAN BUSH
Southern Gravity

Musical Notes CONTINUED



MARTINA McBRIDE is adding several dates to her Everlasting Tour 2015, featuring Martina and an 11-piece band covering classic R&B and soul tunes. Visit martinamcbride.com for the complete list of tour stops.



STEVE EARLE will perform two shows at Nashville's City Winery, on March 6 and 7, in support of his new album, *Terraplane*.

Emmy-winning TV series **BLUEGRASS UNDERGROUND** is coming to the Cumberland Caverns in McMinnville, Tenn., March 27-29 for a subterranean festival of global proportions, featuring **LEE ANN WOMACK, HOT RIZE, THE EARLS OF LEICESTER, ROBERT EARL KEEN** and others.



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Darn Tweetin'

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Can't wait to beat @ThomasRhett at the @CrackleBarrel Country Checkers Challenge! Lol ! ;) **Kellie Pickler** @kelliepickler

Snow day! Too bad there isn't enough to go sledding. **Bucky Covington** @buckycovington

Well today is get back to the real world day, vacation is over and I've got meetings and an interview to do. Looking forward to a fun year. **Charlie Daniels** @CharlieDaniels

Web MD scares me more than most scary movies. And I hate scary movies. **Lindsay Ell** @lindsayell

The nightly toddler war against teeth brushing is real. **Jennifer Nettles** @JenniferNettles

The house is quiet, the birthday weekend was EPIC. Just sitting here feeling like the luckiest guy on the planet...thank you:) love, love, g **Garth Brooks** @GarthBrooks

OMG hacking up a lung I sound like the dog underneath the dinner table in Christmas Vacation **#attractive** **LeAnn Rimes Cibrian** @leannrimes



A DISH BEST SERVED WITH GOAT

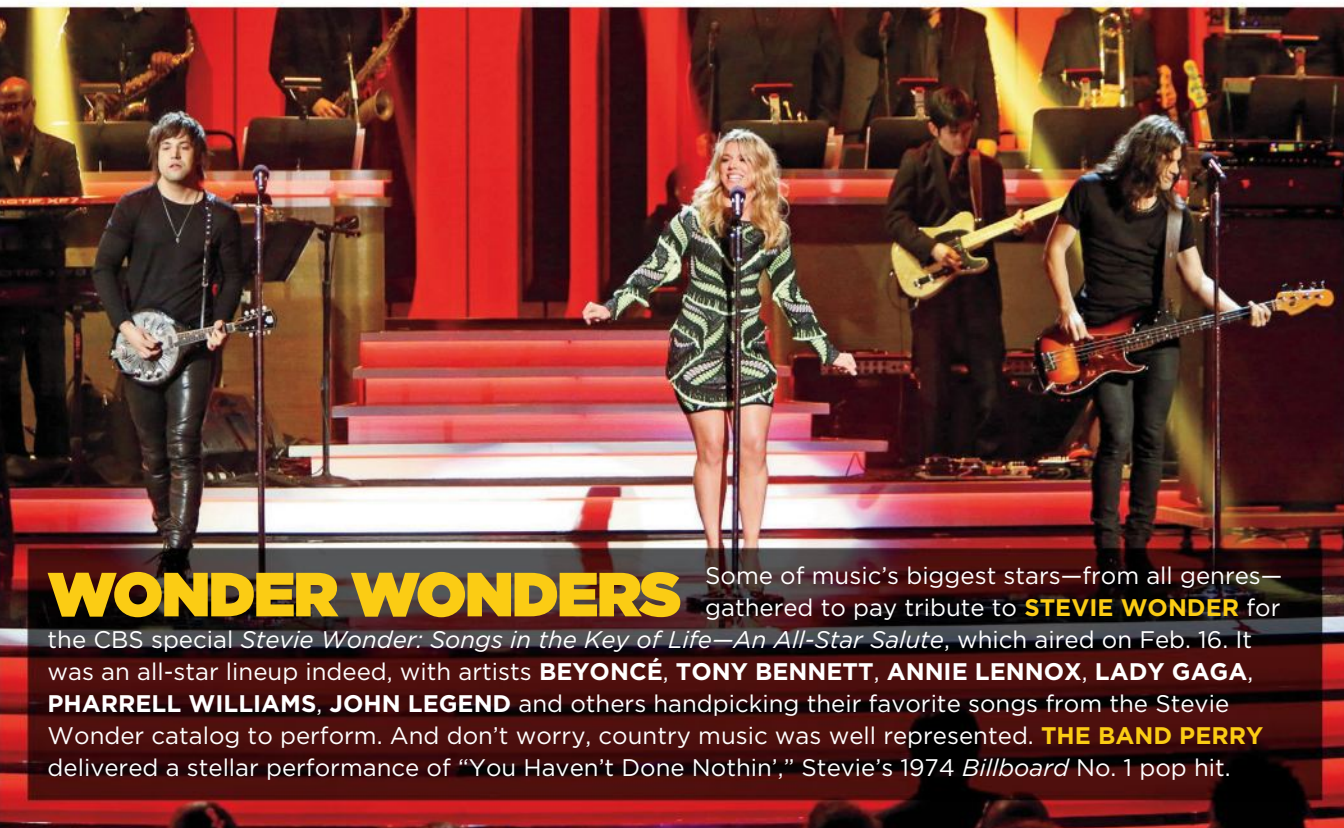
When **DIERKS BENTLEY** coerced his future tourmates **KIP MOORE**, **CANAAN SMITH** and **MADDIE & TAE** into taking a polar plunge into Nashville's Percy Priest Lake in January, Kip was none too pleased. Well, Kip retaliated by declaring war on "Big White," Dierk's beloved Chevy truck. With the camera rolling, Kip arranged for Big White to be filled with foam packing peanuts, covered in graffiti and loaded up with a live goat. It's going to be a long—and entertaining—four months on the road for this group.



DYNAMIC DUO

This year, pop sensation **SAM SMITH** took home four Grammys: Best New Artist, Song of the Year, Record of the Year and Best Pop Vocal Album. Now, the "Stay With Me" singer has his sights set on collaborating with a 2014 Grammy winner, telling *E News*, "I like **KACEY MUSGRAVES**, the country singer. She's great. That [collaboration] would be great." Gauging from Kacey's "Let's do it!" tweet in response, it sounds like this future alliance is gaining some steam.





WONDER WONDERS

Some of music's biggest stars—from all genres—gathered to pay tribute to **STEVIE WONDER** for the CBS special *Stevie Wonder: Songs in the Key of Life—An All-Star Salute*, which aired on Feb. 16. It was an all-star lineup indeed, with artists **BEYONCÉ**, **TONY BENNETT**, **ANNIE LENNOX**, **LADY GAGA**, **PHARRELL WILLIAMS**, **JOHN LEGEND** and others handpicking their favorite songs from the Stevie Wonder catalog to perform. And don't worry, country music was well represented. **THE BAND PERRY** delivered a stellar performance of "You Haven't Done Nothin'," Stevie's 1974 *Billboard* No. 1 pop hit.

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COUNTRY CRUISING

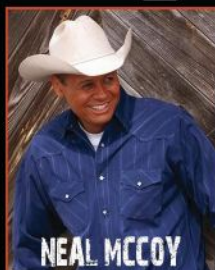


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TIME MANAGEMENT

JUST A LITTLE MORE than two years ago, Sam Hunt stumbled upon a concept he wanted to share with his co-writers. It was a different approach, but he felt strongly enough to speak up in the writing room and see what kind of feedback he would get.

"I was kind of talking over the verse music, and one of my co-writers didn't like it at all," Sam says, laughing. "It didn't fit the vibe in the room, so I just skipped over that."

But Josh Osborne, the third writer in the room, felt completely different. "I thought it was cool. I loved it," says Josh. "It sounded so strangely melodic when he was talking."

The minute Sam and Josh's co-writer left the room to get coffee, Josh let his friend know not to throw that idea away. "I said, 'Let's do something with that at some point,'" recalls Josh.

A short two weeks later, Sam and Josh found themselves writing with Shane McAnally, brainstorming song ideas. Josh reminded Sam about their writing session earlier in the month and felt Shane should hear him out. "Of course, Shane jumped

right on it," Josh says. "When you're writing every day, you're always trying to look for something different or something that will hit you that's not the same thing. This was so cool, and Sam was just so good at that phrasing thing."

When Josh suggested a song title of "Take Your Time," which he describes as a "guy making his sales pitch to the girl," they had all the pieces they needed. "It was literally just the three of us talking for two hours in the room of what would you say if you were actually trying to get to know someone and talk to them, even though I'm sure Sam never has a problem with that," says Josh of the handsome rising star. "Those lines like *I'm sure one of your friends is about to come over here and Everybody in here knows your name, [you're] not looking for anything* . . . so much just came out of us talking and Shane typing it out, almost like a stenographer."

"We had so many lyrics that we were just jotting down," Sam adds. "It came out really fast compared to a lot of other songs that I've written."

"TAKE YOUR TIME"

← Performed by
Sam Hunt

→ Written by
Sam Hunt,
Josh Osborne,
Shane McAnally



DREAM TEAM

Sam, Shane and Josh obviously have great chemistry in the writing room. In addition to writing Sam's lead single, "Leave the Night On," together, Josh and Sam make multiple appearances in the song credits from *Montevallo*:



"Ex to See"

Sam, Josh and Matt Ramsey

"Break Up in a Small Town"

Sam, Shane
and Zach Crowell

"Single for the Summer"

Sam, Shane, Josh
and Zach Crowell

"Make You Miss Me"

Sam, Josh and Matt Ramsey

Once "Take Your Time" was completed, Sam recorded the song for his debut album, *Montevallo*, and released it as the follow-up single to "Leave the Night On."

"This song was a turning point for me, as far as finding that direction as an artist," explains Sam. "I was writing a lot of songs and experimenting with a lot of different sounds and styles because I love so many styles of music. This was one of those situations where the song was waiting for the right time to happen. I'm glad it worked out to write with Josh and Shane. They are two of my favorites to write with."

— ALANNA CONAWAY

A portrait of Adam Levine, a man with dark hair and a beard, wearing a blue button-down shirt. He is looking directly at the camera with a slight smile. A microphone is visible on the left side of the frame. The background is a warm, out-of-focus interior.

ADAM LEVINE

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The Shire logo, featuring the word "Shire" in a bold, sans-serif font.

The ADDA logo, featuring the letters "ADDA" in a bold, sans-serif font, with a stylized figure of a person jumping or running to the left.

The CHADD logo, featuring the letters "CHADD" in a bold, sans-serif font, with a stylized figure of a person jumping or running to the left.

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THE HIT LIST



A-Haw Haw Haw Haw

◀ With a musical score written by **BRANDY CLARK** and **SHANE McANALLY**, *Moonshine: That Hee Haw Musical* is coming to the Dallas Center Theatre on Sept. 2. Lovingly inspired by the iconic cornpone television series, *Moonshine* will tell the story of hometown girl Misty Mae as she introduces her city-boy beau to her family and friends.

Videos for Votes

► Competition for ACM New Artist of the Year is stiff, but it's also friendly, so **TYLER FARR** and **THOMAS RHETT** had a lot of fun with their videos to grab fans' votes for the award. T-Rhett took fans behind the scenes and on the road in his clips, while T-Farr replicated the AT&T commercials in hilarious group chats with grade-schoolers who clearly know the definition of "redneck hippie."



Cash Money

▲ Ronald Reagan was president the last time **ROSANNE CASH** won a Grammy, in 1986 for Best Female Country Vocal Performance for "I Don't Know Why You Don't Want Me." Twenty-nine years later, during the 57th Grammy Awards on Feb. 8, she took home three more, for Best Americana Album, Song and Performance.

Lament for the Lonely

► Nobody can express heart-break like a country singer and nobody can write about it like a country songwriter. **ERIC PASLAY** is both, and in his new single, "She Don't Love You," he's so painfully expressive, you aren't sure whose heart is breaking more, the singer's, the subject's or the sympathetic listener's.



Debonair Dierks

▼ Musically, **DIERKS BENTLEY** always represents country music beautifully, but he's no slouch on the red carpet either, and the recent Grammys were no exception. He rocked the rug in a creamy white-checked John Varvatos slim-fitting European-cut suit. Unfortunately, he was mildly upstaged by his stunning wife, Cassidy, who was in a gold-embellished strapless black fit-and-flare gown.



THE JUKEBOX

Essential songs from the artists featured in this issue!

The Highwaymen
"Highwayman"
"Silver Stallion"

Johnny Cash
"Ring of Fire"

Waylon Jennings
"I'm a Ramblin' Man"

Willie Nelson
"Always on My Mind"

Kris Kristofferson
"Sunday Morning Coming Down"

Jennifer Nettles
"Me Without You"

Ronnie Milsap
"Inside"
"Snap Your Fingers"

Parmalee
"Carolina"

Cole Swindell
"Ain't Worth the Whiskey"

Leroy Van Dyke
"Auctioneer"

Will Hoge
"The Wreckage"

Sam Hunt
"Take Your Time"

Terri Clark
"You're Easy on the Eyes"

Gill Landry
"Take This Body"

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IT'S OK, I'M WITH THE BAND

Remember that **ALAN JACKSON** concert you went to in 1989? Do you still have the T-shirt? Well, get it out and wear it. Retro band tees are the latest trend among country music's biggest stars and, let's face it, die-hard country fans. And if you did score a tee from an early Alan, **GARTH BROOKS** or **ALA-BAMA** concert, hang on to it. We did a little Internet searching and found authentic vintage **WILLIE NELSON** tees for up to \$200! Etsy and eBay are great resources for these costly collectibles, but fortunately, there are some alternatives. Many shops offer retro replicas for a fraction of the cost—and boy, do they love Willie! But next time you go to a **LUKE BRYAN**, **JASON ALDEAN** or **BLAKE SHELTON** show, pick up a tee and pack it away as an investment. — **TAMMY RAGUSA**

Jake
Owen

Chase
Rice

**JOHNNY CASH
THE BIRD TEE**

\$22.99 | rock.com

WILLIE NICE DAY TEE

\$22 | texasstore-austin.com

CASH

JAKE BY MARK DAVIS/GETTY IMAGES; CHASE RICE BY JEFF GOLDEN/GETTY IMAGES; MIRANDA BY FRANCIS SPECKER/CBS; DIERKS BY RICKI ARON/GETTY IMAGES

Miranda
Lambert



**NEW MERLE
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CONCERT TEE**

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**ON THE ROAD
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**RETRO JOHNNY
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\$28 | urbanoutfitters.com

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Flippin' Fantastic

CHEF JEFF HENDERSON OF TV'S *FLIP MY FOOD* MAKES THE ORDINARY EXTRAORDINARY.

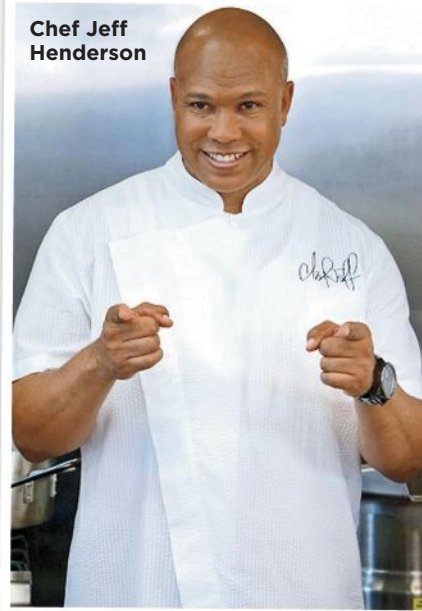
FOLKS WHO "FLIP" HOUSES for fun and profit are dominating reality TV like the so-called real housewives. But flipping food? That would be the sole province of chef Jeff Henderson, the culinary host of the syndicated TV series *Flip My Food*.

In a nutshell, so to speak, chef Jeff flips the favorite dishes of fellow chefs, celebrities and everyday guys and ladies to make a healthier version that's just as tasty. He's put healthy spins on such dishes as pizza, pulled pork sandwiches, fried green tomatoes and other delicacies. And in many episodes, you'll find the charismatic chef hitting the road, traveling to food capitals like Memphis, Savannah, Ga., and Charlotte, N.C., to demonstrate his mouthwatering masterpieces.

Check out a couple of chef Jeff's recipes here. And to find out where *Flip My Food* airs in your local market, visit flipmyfood.com.

— BOB PAXMAN

Chef Jeff Henderson



Grilled Red Snapper

1 red snapper filet
1 lemon, juiced
3 garlic cloves, minced
½ cup olive oil
1 sprig rosemary
2 tbsp. parsley

WHISK together lemon juice, minced garlic, olive oil, chopped rosemary and parsley to make the marinade. **POUR** some of the marinade over the fish and place on top of the grill.

GRILL the fish for 10-13 minutes on a barbecue or stove-top grill until flaky. After the fish has cooked, **DRIZZLE** more of the marinade on top and garnish with a lemon.



Buffalo Burger Sliders

1 pound ground buffalo

1 poblano pepper

1 red bell pepper

1 red onion

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup wild mushrooms, chopped

2 tbsp. olive oil

4 slices provolone cheese

4 eggs

2 tbsp. duck fat

4 slider buns

4 pieces butter lettuce

CHAR the poblano and the red bell peppers, seed them and chop finely.

SLICE the red onion into 1-inch rings and

grill until tender.

CHOP the mushrooms and mix with the chopped peppers and the buffalo meat.

SEASON the meat mixture with salt and pepper and form into small slider patties.

SEAR the patties in a skillet with olive oil for 3 minutes on each side.

PLACE cheese on the patty the last minute of the cooking process so it melts.

FRY an egg with 1 tbsp. duck fat for 2 minutes for an over-easy egg and top the slider when finished.

PLACE the patty on a slider bun and garnish with butter lettuce or any toppings you like.



THE LONG RUN

TERRI CLARK GEARS UP FOR HER FIRST-EVER ½ MARATHON.

**STORY BY
JON FREEMAN**

**PHOTOS BY
MARK MOSRIE**

PHILOSOPHER LAO TZU ONCE SAID, “A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step,” to describe the difficulty of just taking action. It’s hard to say with any certainty if he was a runner, but his statement rings true for anyone taking on a distance challenge. For Canadian songbird Terri Clark, her current journey will top out at around 13.1 miles when she runs the Country Music ½ Marathon in April. The first step was just saying out loud that she wanted to do it.

It’s a gorgeous, mild winter day in Nashville and Terri is picking through the racks at Fleet Feet Sports, a specialty running store that is nestled into a Brentwood-area strip mall. Later, we will head over to nearby Radnor Lake State Park to get in a few miles while it’s still nice. Terri tries to take advantage of days like this one for her training, but at nearly 3 p.m. it’s almost time for her to settle down and sleep if she wants to make it in for her gig as co-host of *America’s Morning Show* on NASH-FM. Those early mornings have been quite an adjustment for Terri and at least part of the reason she wanted to train for the ½ marathon.

“[For] some reason I think the change in my sleeping pattern didn’t really help me and I gained some weight in the past year or so. So that was just one little facet of the motivation,” explains Terri, who purchases a speckled light-blue long-sleeve top and tops it with her own quilted black vest. “A friend of mine said, ‘I’m gonna start





(Left) Terri finds her new mantra on a shirt; (above) shoe selection is of critical importance; (right) time to lace up and hit the streets.

**TO BE A PART
OF TERRI'S
RACE, GO TO
[HEROES.STJUDE.ORG/
TERRICLARK](http://HEROES.STJUDE.ORG/TERRICLARK)
AND DONATE TO
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training for the half.” Terri thought about it for a day or so, and then said she would, too.

The race, a fundraiser for St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital in Memphis, is a combined full marathon, ½ marathon and 5K that brings about 30,000 participants to Nashville every year and winds them through the streets, including Music Row and Lower Broadway. Music figures prominently into the event, but musicians like Terri often choose to run the race as well.

So far, the training hasn’t been too grueling for Terri, though her 16-week plan to get ready is already pushing her to run farther than ever before. “They keep bumping up your mileage by a couple miles every week. So I’m running my first seven miles tomorrow,” she says. “The weekends are consecutive Saturday/Sundays and they design it that way because a lot of people don’t have the time during the week to train and go and run an hour and a half or two hours.”

Though the mileage of her long runs is steadily increasing, Terri’s lungs and heart seem to be handling it just fine. Her hips, on the other hand, are feeling a little bit of the burn. “I’m not having as much trouble, cardio-wise, as I thought I would, as far as being winded,” she explains. “It’s more about just my hips and my hip flexors taking a beating because I don’t have the greatest posture in the world and I’m sure that’s not helping.

“But I’ve got one of these foam roller things that seems to be my new best friend,” she continues, adding with a

hearty laugh, “I would probably take your head off if you tried to take that thing from me right now.”

And if you’re forced to get up in the wee hours of the morning for work like Terri, there’s an added layer of hassle to logging those miles: the fatigue and exhaustion that sets in late in the afternoon when you’re supposed to be getting into bed. “When I get home from the radio station, I’m already seven hours into my day and most people are two or three hours into their day,” she says. “And the challenging part for me is mustering up the energy to be going out and running when most people are having a late lunch. Most folks work out after morning coffee. I’ve already come way down off of that.”

If anything, those obstacles make Terri even more resolute in her desire to cross the finish line in front of Nashville’s LP Field in April. It’s something she can mark off the bucket list, and as a side benefit, it’s a healthy activity. “Personal challenges have driven me in my life and everything I do and that’s part of the reason I’ve been able and lucky enough to do what I do for so long,” she says. “So it’s like, why not try this? As long as I’m not hobbling in on crutches or something, it’s not going to be something that’s bad for me. So it’s really a win-win situation, mentally, emotionally, physically. It gives me something to focus on.”

Helping keep Terri focused through those long runs is her trusty music library and a playlist that contains



Terri makes sure to stretch her legs out before taking off, and cues up some of her favorite music to keep her motivated.



everything from Rod Stewart to Sara Bareilles. Lately, however, she's been hitting her goals to the melancholy strains of Jason Isbell's acclaimed *Southeastern* album. "It's really dark and moody and mellow and acoustic and not really what people would think I would be running to. But I don't have a tempo or a pace. I'm just trying to get to the other end of where I need to be," she says, laughing. "I'm just kind of pulling myself forward."

Terri's fans have backed her every step of the way, no matter how tough, and particularly when it comes to raising money for St. Jude. Previously, Terri raised more than \$20,000 from a yard sale of her be-

longings and donated it to the hospital. "I think anybody who's ever been to a hospital and they have kids—and there are a few out there that I've been to that are amazing and St. Jude is definitely the leader in that whole movement."

For the ½ marathon, Terri smashed her initial fundraising goal in practically no time. "It's an amazing, amazing organization to be helping, and my fans are coming to the table again for it," she says. "We reached our goal in an hour. They continue to amaze me. With everything I strive to do, they're right behind me every step of the way."

And when she laces up her shoes and notches that last tenth of a mile

on April 26, Terri will have the well-earned right to do a little bragging. Because it's not about winning—just running 13.1 miles is an enormous accomplishment worthy of celebration.

"For me to say at my age that I ran my first ½ marathon, I think that's a pretty cool thing," she says, ticking off all the many reasons she wants to be doing it. "For St. Jude, for health reasons and just get myself motivated, back in the saddle, more regimented with exercise."

"I'm not going to be running ½ marathons all the time or five miles or seven miles every day when this is over," she says, before slyly adding, "but it'll be a hell of a lot easier to run three, that's for damn sure." **CW**

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STUDIO
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LUKE
BRYAN

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MANIA
MIRANDA
LAMBERT,
THE BAND
PERRY
AND
BRANDY
CLARK

Broadway Baby!

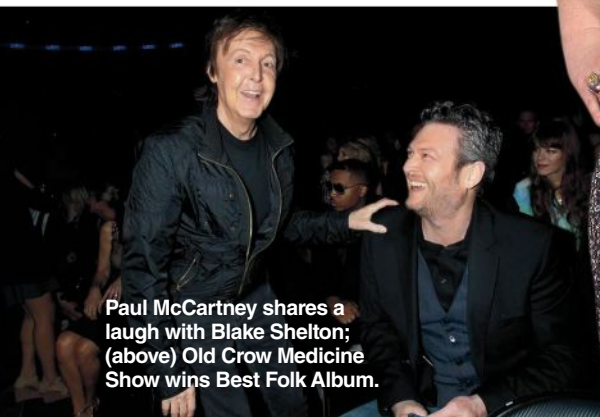
**JENNIFER NETTLES GIVES NASH AN INSIDE PEEK
AT HER NEW ROLE AS ROXIE HART IN CHICAGO**

GRAM SLAM

With 23 performances over the course of the three-and-half-hour program, the 57th Grammy Awards packed as much musical punch as it could into the live CBS broadcast . . . and they still managed to give away more than a few Grammys in the process. Pop newcomer Sam Smith was the biggest winner of the night, taking home four Grammys, while Beyoncé copped three awards, but she once again went home without the Best Album of the Year trophy, which Beck snagged. For all the Taylor Swift fans (or haters) out there, the “Shake It Off” singer went home empty-handed.

On the country front, fans were treated to live performances from Best Country Album winner Miranda Lambert, Eric Church and a Brandy Clark/Dwight Yoakam collaboration. Carrie Underwood won Best Country Solo Performance for “Something in the Water,” while The Band Perry nabbed Best Country Duo or Group Performance for “Gentle on My Mind.” Glen Campbell continued his legendary list of accolades by winning Best Country Song for “I’m Not Gonna Miss You,” and Rosanne Cash dominated the Americana/Roots category by winning three Grammys.

Grammy nominee Hunter Hayes looking dapper in his tux



Paul McCartney shares a laugh with Blake Shelton; (above) Old Crow Medicine Show wins Best Folk Album.



Brandy Clark and Dwight Yoakam perform “Hold My Hand” after Brandy walked the red carpet.



Rocking leather pants and a dazzling top, Miranda performs "Little Red Wagon."



Husband and wife Blake and Miranda arrive on the red carpet.



Rosanne Cash won three awards in the Americana/Roots category: Album, Song and Performance of the Year.



Eric Church performs "Hometown" for the crowd.



What's in Eric's red Solo cup? We may never know; (above) Miranda shows off her Grammy for Best Country Album; (left) The Band Perry makes a new friend in Jamie Foxx.



Taylor Swift and Kanye West share a shake while Jay Z looks on; (left) The Band Perry poses with their new hardware.

ERIC: PERRY BY ROBIN BECK/GETTY IMAGES; MIRANDA: BY VINCE BUONICCONTI/CONTOUR; JAMIE: BY MICHAEL TRACY/GETTY IMAGES; KATHERINE & ERIC: BY CHRISTOPHER POLK/GETTY IMAGES; TAYLOR: JAY Z/KANYE/KIMBLE FRANCIS SPECKER/CBS

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HART & SOUL

**JENNIFER
NETTLES**
RAZZLE-
DAZZLES
THEM ON
BROADWAY
IN *CHICAGO*.

STORY BY
SARAH RODMAN



WHEN JENNIFER NETTLES was 10 years old she took the Amtrak train from her hometown of Jesup, Ga., to Manhattan, where her great-aunt and great-uncle took her to see her first Broadway musical, the classic *A Chorus Line*.

"First of all," says Jennifer with a laugh, "I was scandalized at [the racy number] 'Dance: 10; Looks: 3!' But I was also just mesmerized by the whole thing and the way that it worked."

Nettles family lore has it that when Jennifer walked out of the theater she looked longingly at the marquee and her great-aunt consoled her by saying she might be able to return one day. "She said I looked up and said, 'Oh, I'll be back.'"

That determined little girl, whose first album was the soundtrack to *Annie*, was right. The singer/songwriter and female half of Sugarland is currently dazzling audiences as "merry

murderess" Roxie Hart in the long-running revival of the Tony-winning musical *Chicago*.

"I am having a blast," Jennifer says with a huge smile, sitting in her dressing room backstage at the Ambassador Theater in New York City. The room smells divine thanks to the many arrangements of sweet-smelling flowers that have been sent by well-wishers during the opening week of her run, which is expected to conclude March 29.

As she talks about fulfilling this lifelong dream, Jennifer begins applying the stage makeup that will transform her from sweet-natured, thoroughly modern Southern chanteuse into *Chicago*'s sassy, Jazz Age "killer chorine" Roxie. The spunky character lands in the slammer after shooting her lover but is scheming for a way out of a conviction and onto the vaudeville stage with the help of serpentine lawyer Billy Flynn.

Both she and the actor who plays Flynn, Broadway veteran Alexander Gemignani, were thrown for a loop when the original actor set to star opposite Jennifer was injured a few days before opening night—a night on which they were expect to execute some pretty elaborate choreography.

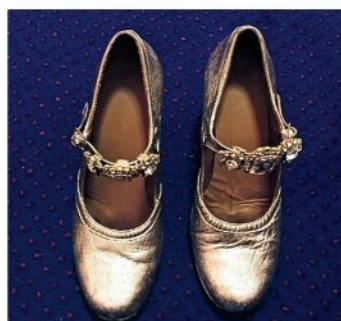
"I think we had two three-hour rehearsals," says Alexander, who chalks up the pair's smooth transition from those scant run-throughs to hitting their marks in front of a sold-out house to Jennifer's game attitude and live performance experience.

"One of the great things about Jennifer is she is so easy in front of a crowd. She doesn't get thrown by things," continues Alexander, who has also logged time on the legit stage in *Assassins* and once performed opposite Reba McEntire in a pair of Carnegie Hall concert performances of *South Pacific*.

"I actually don't know what her theatrical background is other than her



Jennifer with *Chicago* co-star Carly Hughes (as Velma Kelley)



Jennifer looks every bit the part of killer ingénue Roxie Hart, knocking the crowd dead with her brassy voice and fancy footwork in the musical's tricky dance numbers, and (bottom) takes in the applause with co-star Alexander Gemignani.



JENNIFER NETTLES CONTINUED

fierce band, but she's so great," says Alexander, a Sugarland fan who says the duo's music served as accompaniment on several road trips with his wife.

"From her first performance it felt like she had a lot of ease. When you're heading up a show like that, if you put out that energy, then everybody around you works with ease. There's a wonderful confidence she has, and rightfully so, in her ability to be in this world."


Alexander has seen his share of outsiders come to Broadway and says that Jennifer has been a good fit for the "do your job" mentality of the stage community. "There's a lot of celebrities making their debuts on Broadway on a fairly regular basis in various things and it's really nice when, regardless of their celebrity status, they can come in and blow your socks off," he says. "I think it's refreshing and it doesn't hurt when they're really nice and down-to-earth and there's no air of celebrity around them. It's been a really lovely experience."

Anyone who has seen Jennifer perform live—with her animated facial expressions, cheeky dance moves and powerful vocals—knows that she was born to entertain, and she's relishing the chance for fans to see her in a different light, showcasing other colors in her voice, and maybe even drawing some to Broadway for the first time.

"That part for me is really humbling and exciting," says Jennifer, as she moves from one eyelid to the next. "If I can open a door of art and entertainment for people who may not have already seen a Broadway production before, how fun is that? How exciting is that?"

Although Jennifer did perform in high school and college productions, they were mostly straight plays, not musicals, including a stint as Mother Superior in *Agnes of God*. So it was *Chicago*'s famed Bob Fosse choreography, so precise and well-known, that presented the biggest challenge.

"That for me was the newest and scariest and, consequently, the most thrilling and exciting part. Because I have danced before and I love dancing but I am not a trained dancer and

A photograph of Jennifer Nettles sitting on a stool in a recording studio. She is wearing a black lace dress and holding a vintage-style microphone. The background shows studio equipment like lights and stands. Large red text is overlaid on the left side of the image.

"I HAD SEEN
THAT IT'S OK
IF YOU JUMP
OUT OF THE
MACHINE FOR A
LITTLE WHILE."

it is so specific," says Jennifer, who now relishes fancy-footwork numbers like "Hot Honey Rag."

Jennifer seized the opportunity when it was presented to her and it fit well after her tour for her 2014 debut solo album, *That Girl*.

"I think since I've had a kid, how I'm approaching things is different," says Jennifer of son Magnus, born in 2013. "If I'm doing [something], I want it to be fun and I want it to be worth it. If I'm going to be away from my kid, I want it to be life-giving, not only for me but also as an example for him, of how you live life: you make choices and you pursue a dream. I had been touring differently already since he was born, and even being pregnant and doing a solo project I had seen

that it's OK if you jump out of the machine of it for a little while. It's there and you don't have to run yourself ragged all the time. Of course you strike when the iron's hot, but I just realized I get to make these choices. My career doesn't run me, I run it."

As for her day job, Jennifer says she is hoping to put out another solo record in 2015 but it is contingent on various business issues coming together. "If all the pieces come together to support the art, then I want to go and make a new record," she says, expressing disappointment that country radio did not embrace *That Girl* with the same enthusiasm as her fans.

"If they don't seem to be coming together at the right time in the right way, I'll wait and I could extend my run [as

Roxie]. I'm open to it if the stars align."

While she waits on those astronomical signs, she is loving life in *Chicago*.

"Number one, the show is sexy, and number two, the character is so lovable even though she is cra-zy," says Jennifer with a laugh, noting that she understands Roxie's dreams if not her homicidal ways.

"When Roxie says in the monologue, 'I'm older than I ever intended to be, and all my life I had a dream of vaudeville but I thought the opportunity had passed me by,' I feel a whole lot of empathy and kinship there," she says. "Who knew if this was really ever going to happen, even though it was a fire I had had burning for a while?"

Ten-year-old Jennifer Nettles knew, that's who. **N**

NASH MARCH MADNESS?

THE SHEET 16

1. MIRANDA LAMBERT (Oklahoma)

- Grammy Best Country Album
- CMA Female Vocalist of the Year
- CMA Album of the Year



8. MADDIE & TAE (Texas/Oklahoma)

- *Billboard* No. 1 debut single
- CMT and GAC No. 1 video
- Grand Ole Opry debut



Maddie & Tae may be country's breakout act of 2014 with their debut single, "Girl in a Country Song," but look for "Air" Lambert to split this double-team and take the ball right to the hole for a monster jam and runaway win.

5. GARTH BROOKS (Oklahoma)

- *Billboard* No. 1 album
- RIAA platinum album
- 80-plus-date world tour



4. DIERKS BENTLEY (Arizona)

- CMA Video of the Year
- Grammy Best Country Album nomination
- *Billboard* No. 1 album



If there's one thing Dierks can't do, it's let sentimental favorite Garth—and his alligator blood—hang around for the second half. Dierks needs to rise up and put this matchup away before the crowd starts begging for a "Friends in Low Places" encore.

6. KEITH URBAN (Australia)

- CMA Musical Event of the Year
- Grammy Best Country Duo/Group Performance nom.
- Grammy Best Country Solo Performance nomination



3. CARRIE UNDERWOOD (Oklahoma)

- Grammy Best Country Solo Performance
- CMA Special Achievement Award
- *Billboard* No. 1 album



Keith and Carrie went head to head on music's biggest stage—the Grammys—in the Best Country Solo Performance category, and the 2005 *Idol* winner came out with the big win against the *Idol* judge. Can she do it again on our stage?

7. KACEY MUSGRAVES (Texas)

- ACM Album of the Year
- CMA Song of the Year
- CMA Female Vocalist of the Year nomination



2. BLAKE SHELTON (Oklahoma)

- CMA Male Vocalist of the Year
- CMA Entertainer of the Year nomination
- ACM Entertainer of the Year nomination



With diametrically opposed game plans, Blake has become the face of country music with appearances on *The Voice* and *Saturday Night Live* (fast-paced offense), while Kacey has been aiming her arrow straight at country's heart (hard-nosed defense).

THE ELITE 8

AVAILABLE IN
OUR MARCH 16
ISSUE

THE FINAL 4

AVAILABLE IN
OUR MARCH 23
ISSUE

THE FINALS

AVAILABLE IN
OUR MARCH 30
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WHO WILL WIN?

THE WEST

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THE CHAMPION
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MARCH MADNESS

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In honor of March Madness, *NASH* created a bracket with 16 of the hottest solo/duo acts in country music. We seeded them based on the strength of their current "season" and pitted them against each other in a winner-takes-all format that features East vs. West. For the next four weeks, visit *CountryWeekly.com* and VOTE on who you think should win the head-to-head battles until we crown our champ.

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ASEY

THE FINALS

AVAILABLE IN
OUR MARCH 30
ISSUE

THE FINAL 4

AVAILABLE IN
OUR MARCH 23
ISSUE

THE ELITE 8

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THE SWEET 16

WIN IT ALL?

MAGAZINE

CHAMPION
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APRIL 6 ISSUE

MADNESS

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TODAY!

THE EAST



1. LUKE BRYAN (Georgia)

- CMA Entertainer of the Year
- ACC Male Vocalist of the Year
- AMA Favorite Country Male Artist



8. STURGILL SIMPSON (Kentucky)

- Grammy Best Americana Album nominee
- Americana Awards Emerging Artist of the Year
- *Billboard* No. 8 album

Sturgill is like the mid-major that gets an automatic bid for winning his Americana conference tourney, but he's in for a David vs. Goliath matchup against country powerhouse Luke B., who is on the biggest winning streak in the East.



5. TIM MCGRAW (Louisiana)

- ACM Video of the Year
- Grammy Best Country Duo/Group Perf. nom.
- *Billboard* No. 1 album



4. ERIC CHURCH (North Carolina)

- Grammy Best Country Album nominee
- Grammy Best Country Song nominee
- AMA Favorite Country Album

Eric had a tough home stretch before the tourney, failing to win any of his four Grammy nominations to secure a higher seed, but he's still the favorite against wily vet Tim McGraw, who has once again proven his resiliency on- and offstage.



6. KENNY CHESNEY (Tennessee)

- ACC Groundbreaker Award
- *Billboard* No. 1 album
- RIAA platinum song



3. JASON ALDEAN (Georgia)

- ACM Male Vocalist of the Year
- *Billboard* No. 1 album
- RIAA platinum album

With Kenny's No Shoes Nation going head to head against Aldean's Army, this dogfight has the Vegas sportsbook worried that an upset is brewing. It may come down to the last shot: who puts on a better live show.



7. SAM HUNT (Georgia)

- *Billboard* No. 1 album
- *Billboard* No. 1 song
- *Billboard* 200 (all genre) No. 3 album

2. FLORIDA GEORGIA LINE (Florida/Georgia)

- CMA Vocal Duo of the Year
- AMA Favorite Band/Duo/Group
- *Billboard* 200 (all genre) No. 1 album



Sam may have the best crossover in the game right now, but FGL's anything-goes bravado poses a tough matchup for the newcomer, especially since he'll be facing a double-team all game long.



SELFLESS ACT

KIX SITS DOWN WITH **LUKE BRYAN** TO DISCUSS HOW FAMILY SHOULD COME THROUGH FOR ONE ANOTHER IN THE DARKEST OF HOURS.

KIX: How are your boys?

LUKE: Bo is 6 and Tate is 4. And we've got Til. My brother-in-law [Lee] that just passed, his youngest boy is living with us now. So I've got a 13-year-old at the house.

KIX: How is the family dynamic there? What was your boys' reaction?

LUKE: They love it. It's funny because Bo went from being the biggest in the household and now he's middle. And Til will get up there and rough him up a little bit and he'll come down and I'll have to talk to Til and see what went down. Half the time Til's not telling the whole truth and half the time Bo's not telling the whole truth. After me being the judge and a court session I finally suss out what really went down. Bo had his first legitimate bloody nose Super Bowl night. Chaos around the Bryan house.

KIX: Not to get too heavy, but when your brother-in-law died and you went from being Uncle Luke to hav-

ing to take the position of dad, how did that conversation go?

LUKE: The thing about my brother-in-law is he had kind of had some plans to move to Nashville. There are three children involved. There's Jordan, who is 19 and at college, and Kris, who is 16. A 16-year-old girl you ain't pulling out of their high school situation. But Til had really been anticipating moving to Nashville. Really Kris and [Jordan] wanting to stay down where I'm from is really Til and Lee's only reason for not packing up and moving to Nashville. So when we asked Til at the right time, he was really hellbent on moving to Nashville.

KIX: Knowing [your wife] Caroline, there probably wasn't much hesita-

tion taking this on either?

LUKE: Not at all. The amazing thing is to be blessed in this business to where you can do what you gotta do without any moment's hesitation, to be able to do what you gotta do for your family. And our whole family has rallied together and been amazing. When Lee passed away, the whole month of December was just decision after decision. It was literally three hours a day for five or six days in a row meeting with the family, sussing things out. And it is still an ever-changing situation.

KIX: Did that make you feel like a grown-up?

LUKE: It was weird. You know how families go. We've got my dad, who was kind of the patriarch, and everybody leaned on Lee down there, too, for some guidance and stuff like that. Now there is a big void there. It's like, old country singer immature Luke here has to make some big-boy decisions.



Award-winning musician **KIX BROOKS** hosts the national radio shows *American Country Countdown* and *Kickin' It With Kix*.



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NASH | *ON the SCENE*

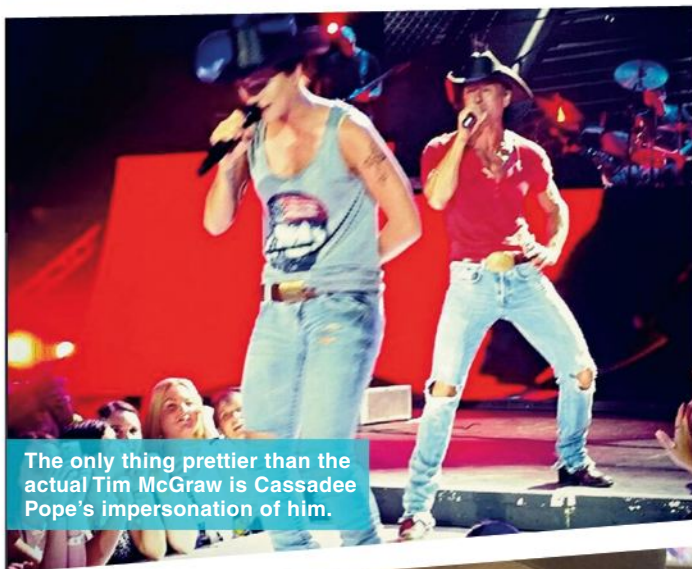
OUT AND ABOUT WITH YOUR FAVORITE STARS!



Cole Swindell and Dustin Lynch know that article 5.3 of the Bro Nation by-laws clearly states: sun's out, guns out.



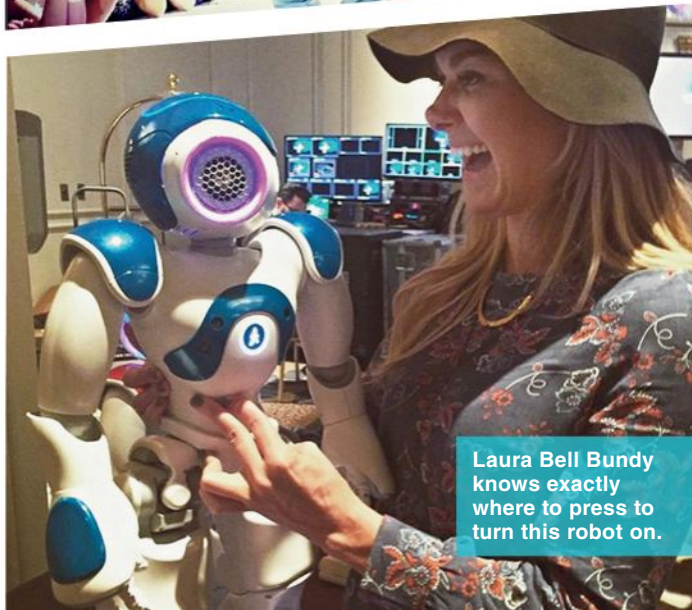
Jana Kramer and fiancé Michael Caussin are a jump-roping match made in heaven.



The only thing prettier than the actual Tim McGraw is Cassadee Pope's impersonation of him.



With Kelby out of this pic, Jaren and Neil of The Cadillac Three found a suitable replacement.



Laura Bell Bundy knows exactly where to press to turn this robot on.



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Jennifer Hudson, Stand Up To Cancer Ambassador

Shiva Malek, Ph.D.

NASH | SOUND BITES

WHAT YOUR FAVORITE STARS ARE SAYING ON NASH-FM

My last show that I did, I did at the beginning of December and it was an hour show. I was so glad when I got a slow song because I was like, "I gotta sit down."

CARRIE UNDERWOOD

on singing while being pregnant

I wrote it just because I thought it was something that needed to be said—"pray for peace"—and so I put it on the album just so people who hadn't heard it before, hopefully, it will inspire them and help them through a rough situation.

REBA McENTIRE

about her "Pray for Peace" single

I told her the thing about that wedding is I'm getting to marry her, so that's like the ultimate wedding gift.

BRANTLEY GILBERT

about fiancée Amber Cochran

We've been friends, you know, since like eighth grade or something like that, so we know the ins and outs of each other.

THOMAS RHETT

about his wife, Lauren

His smile and teeth have more of a presence than my teeth.

LUKE BRYAN

about Dustin Lynch

It was a great game. I loved it. Last year's was such a blowout so I love just a great, great Super Bowl game all the way down to the end.

DAVE HAYWOOD

of Lady Antebellum

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NASHVILLE ZOO

Tucked within the trees off of one of the main thoroughfares in Music City is the Nashville Zoo at Grassmere, a sweet sanctuary for more than 6,000 animals, including the furry, finned, shelled and scaled. The zoo can be a quick stop or an all-day experience for visitors, with a variety of exhibits and activities for all ages. In fact, the zoo's jungle gym will have even the most curmudgeonly adult wanting to be a kid again with its 35-foot-tall treehouse and giant snake tunnel.

There's plenty to see, do, touch and learn on the 84 acres of habitat. The zoo hosts outdoor movies—Zoovies—when the weather permits, and the annual Ghouls at Grassmere is a fun alternative to traditional trick-or-treating at Halloween. They also are firmly committed to conservation with programs that cultivate awareness of habitat protection and breeding, along with educating young folks with programs that give a peek into the life of a zookeeper and allow interaction with the animals.

And this is a growing zoo. With more than 100 acres to develop, you'll want to visit every time you're in Nashville as new animals and exhibits are added to the landscape.

— TAMMY RAGUSA





Thirty years after **Johnny Cash, Willie Nelson, Waylon Jennings** and **Kris Kristofferson** first joined forces, **The Highwaymen** are still country music's superest of supergroups.

BY JIM CASEY

ALWAYS BE AROUND

There's nothing more American than country music (except maybe apple pie), so it seems apropos that The Highwaymen's first live performance occurred at Willie Nelson's annual Fourth of July Picnic in 1985, where the four desperados gathered to sing three songs on a rain-soaked stage in Austin, Texas. The formation of this great tetrarchy, however, ironically has its roots in Montreux, Switzerland, in November 1984, when Johnny invited Willie, Waylon and Kris to be his guests and perform at the taping of a Christmas television special for CBS. Why Montreux? "Because this is where the baby Jesus was born," deadpanned Waylon at an '84 press conference, but Switzerland actually happened to be where Johnny was ending his 10-day European tour. In retrospect, the neutrality-loving locale seems a befitting backdrop for four of country music's most notorious outlaws to hatch their grand scheme.

The four stars must have had a festive time during their impromptu jam sessions at Montreux Palace Hotel on Lake Geneva, because when they returned stateside three weeks later, things got real, as they say. At music producer Chips Moman's Nashville studio, Willie and Kris reconvened at Johnny's behest, as he was recording songs the two had penned ("They're All the Same" and "Here Comes That Rainbow Again," respectively) for his new album, *Rainbow*. A spur-of-the-moment call to Waylon, and the four troubadours were back in the saddle together. Johnny decided to put his solo project on hold, and by the time Christmas rolled around, the quartet had recorded 10 songs, including their title track and what would later become the

supergroup's namesake. The song, of course? "Highwayman," a four-part narrative about a soul's reincarnation that was written by Jimmy Webb and previously recorded in 1978 by Glen Campbell, whose record label, Capitol, decided not to release it as a single.

When the album dropped in May 1985, the single, "Highwayman," rose to No. 1 and spent 20 weeks on *Billboard's* Hot Country Songs chart, while the album reached No. 1 on *Billboard's* Top Country Albums chart. And just like that, The Highwaymen were hitting the highway going 100. Tours followed, as did two additional studio albums, 1990's *Highwayman 2* and 1995's *The Road Goes On Forever*. While their subsequent albums never found the same bottled lightning as their original endeavor, no country supergroup—before or since—has contained a group of artists as singularly acclaimed as Johnny, Willie, Waylon and Kris. And by the way, the song that Capitol Records didn't let Glen release as a single? Well, it earned Jimmy Webb a 1985 Grammy for Best Country Song.

"Four for the price of one." That's how Johnny described the hardscrabble creation of The Highwaymen. With inflation, that comes to about 40 for the price of one in today's marketplace. Their music aside, when they united for The Highwaymen, they had collectively survived 12 marriages, more than 100 years on the road, a decade in the U.S. armed forces and countless bottles of whiskey. Their musical accolades—and folkloric escapades—are as abundant as those of any foursome in the history of country music, and their music, as they sing in the chorus of their most famed song, *will always be around and around and around and around*.



(From left) Willie, Waylon, Johnny and Kris perform as The Highwaymen in 1990.

B&W PHOTO BY SENOR MCGUIRE; PERF BY BETH GWINN/RETNA/CORBIS



JOHNNY CASH

AT A GLANCE: singer, songwriter, Man in Black

AWARDS: Country Music Hall of Fame, Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award, Kennedy Center Honor, National Medal of Arts

SIGNATURE SONGS: "I Walk the Line" and "Folsom Prison Blues"

MAN FACTOR: Johnny Cash's commanding baritone could make anyone sit up and pay attention as if God himself were speaking. His 6-foot-2-inch height, coupled with his brooding manner and all-black dress, added up to a tough-guy image that suggested shooting a man to watch him die wasn't out of the realm of possibility.

OVER THE TOP: Johnny battled an addiction to painkillers for a good portion of his life. It flared up again in the '80s, after an ostrich that lived on his property kicked him and left him seriously injured.

BONUS: A fan of all kinds of music, Johnny supplied the liner notes to Bob Dylan's album *Nashville Skyline* and, during his '90s revival, recorded songs by alternative favorites Beck and Nick Cave.

JOHNNY COURTESY GIG; WAYLON COURTESY CMT

LIFE IS A HIGHWAY

May 1985

Kris, Johnny, Waylon and Willie



release *Highwayman*.

Jan. 1986

Johnny reteams with Sun Records compatriots Carl Perkins, Jerry Lee

Lewis and Roy Orbison for *Class of '55*.



March 1986

Waylon's MCA Records debut

following 20 years with RCA, *Will the Wolf Survive*, is released.

Jan. 1989

Johnny leaves Baptist Hospital after

double-bypass surgery.

Feb. 1990

The guys reunite for *Highwayman 2*.



WAYLON JENNINGS

AT A GLANCE: singer, songwriter, musician

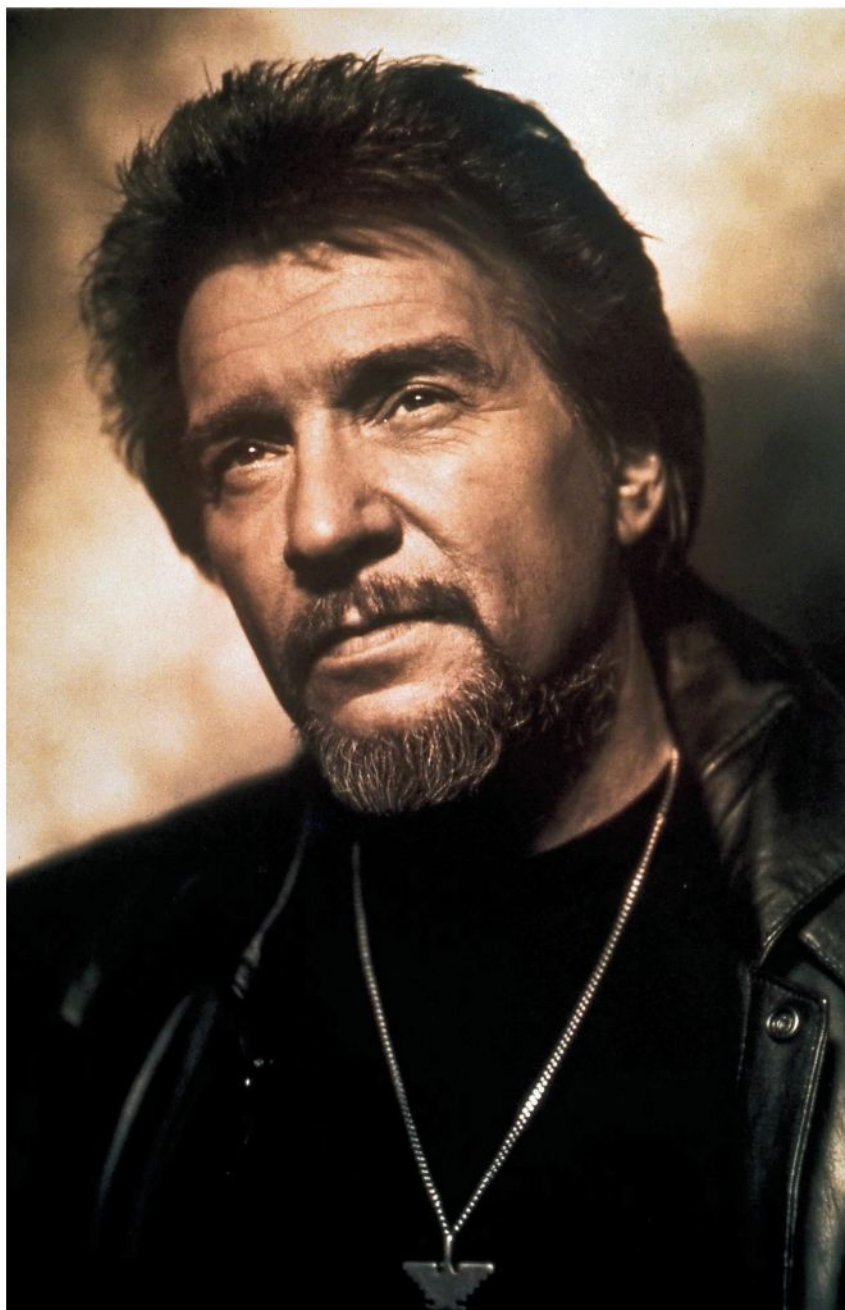
AWARDS: ACM Cliffie Stone Pioneer Award, Country Music Hall of Fame, CMA Male Vocalist of the Year

SIGNATURE SONGS: "Luckenbach, Texas (Back to the Basics of Love)" and "Good Ol' Boys"

MAN FACTOR: Waylon and Willie were at the center of the groundbreaking "Outlaw" movement in the 1970s. They spoke for many artists of the time who were frustrated at the strict control labels exerted over their music and were determined to record the songs they wanted and choose where they would record them and who would produce them.

OVER THE TOP: Waylon's saga began in 1959, when he famously did not board the plane that killed Buddy Holly and three others when it crashed in an Iowa field.

BONUS: In the late 1960s, Waylon and Johnny Cash shared an apartment in Nashville. One can only imagine the wine, women and occasional songs that wound their way through those doors.



Aug. 1989
Kris stars as the male lead in the time-travel film *Millennium*.

Sept. 1990
The Internal Revenue

Service seizes Willie's assets—including his Texas ranch—for unpaid taxes.

June 1993
Waylon



shows a softer side with the children's album

Cowboys, Sisters, Rascals & Dirt.

July 1993
Johnny sings on Irish rock group U2's "The Wanderer."

April 1994
Johnny's Rick Rubin-produced *American Recordings*



is released and ignites a late-career renaissance.

April 1995
The final installment of The Highwaymen



trilogy—*The Road Goes On Forever*—is released.

WILLIE NELSON

AT A GLANCE: singer, songwriter, musician, actor, owner of Trigger the guitar

AWARDS: Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award, Grammy Legend Award, Kennedy Center Honor and the first recipient of the CMA's Willie Nelson Lifetime Achievement Award

SIGNATURE SONGS: "On the Road Again" and "Always on My Mind"

MAN FACTOR: The good-natured Texan has hosted his annual Fourth of July Picnic for 40 years and remains a supporter of America's agricultural community through his work with Farm Aid.

OVER THE TOP: Willie is an uninhibited advocate of the legalization of marijuana. His campaign reached an all-time high when he was made co-chair of the advisory board of the National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana.

BONUS: Willie lopped off his signature braids in 1980 and presented them to Waylon Jennings to encourage him on his road to sobriety. They sold for \$37,000 last year at auction.



WILLIE BY AP PHOTO/CORBIS; KRIS BY JIM COOPER/AP PHOTO/CORBIS

Jan. 1998

Johnny's album *Unchained* wins the Best Country Album Grammy award.



Aug. 1998

Kris shows up in a supporting role in *Blade*, a Wesley Snipes-led vampire action flick.

Sept. 1998

Willie's



acclaimed album *Teatro* is released.

Oct. 2000

Waylon releases his final album, *Never Say Die: Live*, which was recorded at the Ryman Auditorium.



Feb. 2002

Waylon dies in Arizona.

April 2003

"Beer for My Horses," a Toby Keith single featuring Willie, is released and

goes on to hit No. 1.

May 2003

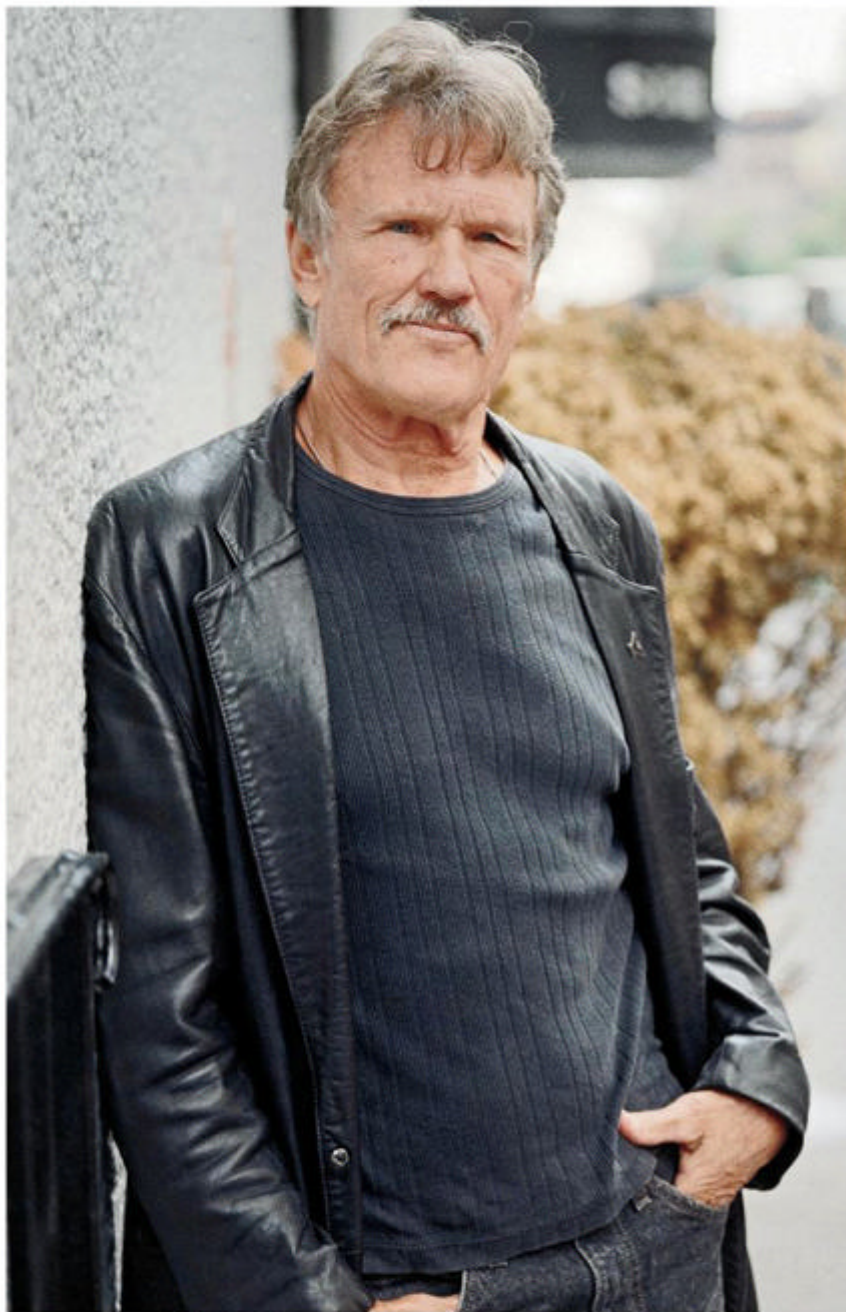
Johnny's wife, June Carter Cash, dies.

Sept. 2003

Johnny dies.

Jan. 2005

Willie headlines Tsunami Relief: Austin to Asia concert to benefit victims of the Indian Ocean earthquake in 2004.



KRIS KRISTOFFERSON

AT A GLANCE: singer, songwriter, musician, actor

AWARDS: Country Music Hall of Fame, Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award, Golden Globe, Oscar nomination, three Grammys

SIGNATURE SONGS: "Sunday Morning Coming Down" and "Me and Bobby McGee"

MAN FACTOR: Couple his U.S. Army Ranger skills with his Blue award for boxing from Oxford University (where he was a Rhodes Scholar) and you get a man capable of giving the entire bro-country nation a beat-down . . . at the same time.

OVER THE TOP: Determined to get his demo of "Sunday Morning Coming Down" in the hands of his idol Johnny Cash, Kris landed a helicopter in Johnny's front yard in 1969.

BONUS: Kris has more than 100 acting credits to his name, including performances in *A Star Is Born*, *Blade* and *Payback*. **CW**

March 2006
Kris releases *This Old Road*, his first album of new material in 11 years.



Sept. 2009
Kris' album *Closer to the Bone*, which Don Was produced, is released.

Feb. 2010
The posthumously released *American VI: Ain't No Grave* becomes the final installment



in Johnny's *American Recordings* series.

April 2010
Willie releases the traditional *Country Music*, produced by T Bone Burnett.

Nov. 2012
Willie's memoir *Roll Me Up and Smoke*



Me When I Die hits stores.

March 2014
Out Among the Stars, a "lost" Johnny Cash album that had been recorded

in the '80s but shelved, finally sees the light of day.



LIKE A *Song*

STORY BY BOB PAXMAN | PHOTOS BY CARISSA RICARDI

RONNIE MILSAP receives a special honor from the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum—a fascinating exhibit on his life and career.

THIS PAST YEAR, Ronnie Milsap became a member of the elite in entertainment when he was inducted into the Country Music Hall of Fame. Now, the hallowed Hall is giving Ronnie an extra—and well deserved—prop with an exhibit profiling his life and career, *Ronnie Milsap: A Legend in My Time*. The exhibit is currently running at the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum in downtown Nashville through Aug. 31.

Ronnie's amazing story would seem a natural fit for a dedicated museum piece. There is often talk

of artists who have “overcome obstacles” in their lives, but in Ronnie's case, that's no mere cliché. As many fans know, Ronnie has been blind since childhood. But he showed a gift for music even at a young age and was able to study classical piano at a school in North Carolina, his home state. Eventually, Ronnie found work as a performer and session pianist in Memphis, playing on recordings for Elvis Presley, among others.

In 1972, Ronnie and his wife, Joyce, moved to Nashville so Ronnie could pursue country music. He landed a

gig playing nights at the King of the Road motel, owned by Roger Miller. After signing with RCA, Ronnie achieved his first No. 1, “Pure Love,” in 1974 and the saga only continued to soar upward.

Ronnie has scored a total of 35 *Billboard* No. 1 hits over his career, placing him in the Top 10 of all time. He won eight Country Music Association awards, including Entertainer of the Year in 1977, and six Grammys. Contemporary artists like Blake Shelton and Hunter Hayes list Ronnie as a seminal influence on their musical styles.





FROM R&B TO COUNTRY

Ronnie's own steeped-in-soul style was a product of his earliest influences, like R&B greats Ray Charles and Little Richard. He also loved listening to the Grand Ole Opry radio broadcasts on Saturday nights. Riding those dual influences, Ronnie deftly mixed blues and country, giving him a unique and easily identifiable sound.

Fans will get a clear picture of Ronnie's R&B roots in the new Hall of Fame exhibit. One artifact on display is a 45 RPM record he made for the R&B label Scepter Records in the

mid-1960s, a cover of the traditional lament "House of the Rising Sun." Also part of the exhibit is a publicity photo for Scepter, taken in 1965.

Ronnie recorded eight singles for the label, with only one Top 20 success, "Never Had It So Good." That record actually became more famous for its B-side, "Let's Go Get Stoned," a future hit for his idol Ray Charles.

Mick Buck, curatorial director of the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum, notes that Ronnie's R&B leanings proved more help than hindrance when he entered the

country field. "Ronnie came along at the right time, when country was more open to diverse styles," Mick explains. "Certainly, R&B was part of his roots, but he was as country as anyone. That served him well in the long run."

Ronnie Milsap: A Legend in My Time obviously places the emphasis on the musical side, with his awards, including all six Grammys, prominently displayed. One of Ronnie's treasured pieces is also featured, a gold certification plaque in Braille for his 1977 album, *It Was Almost Like a Song*.

Gems From Ronnie

Ronnie Milsap shares some fascinating career stories.

Ronnie Milsap officially kicked off his exhibit at the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum with an invitation-only opening reception at the Hall building in Nashville. Before the party got underway, Ronnie met with members of the media to share some career memories.

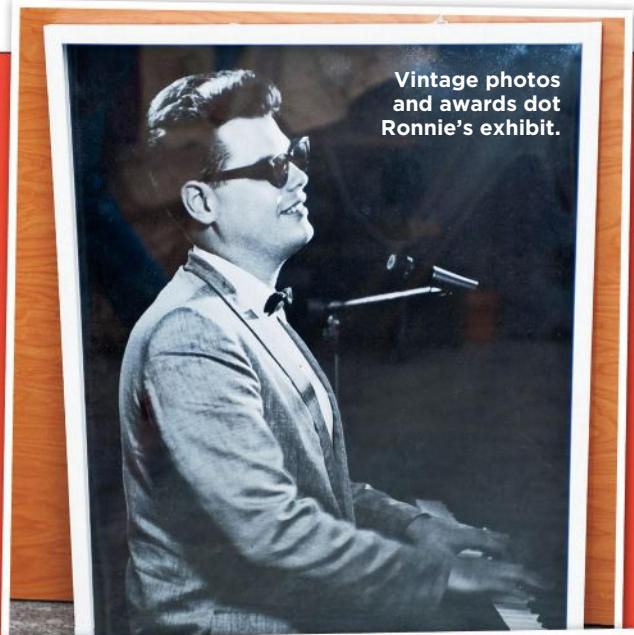
On his favorite song to perform, Ronnie pulled out an unexpected answer. "My favorite to play onstage was a song that did not go to No. 1," Ronnie said. "But it was the biggest international hit I ever had—'Stranger in My House.' It was No. 1 in Australia. It's the most fun for me to play."

And there were the songs that got away. Ronnie recalled that after winning the 1977 CMA Entertainer of the Year honor, songs were being pitched to him right and left. "This one song was sent over to my publisher, but he turned it down," Ronnie began. He then lit into a perfectly rendered, a cappella version of "You Are So Beautiful," which became a monster smash for English blues master Joe Cocker. "So, I've won some and lost some," Ronnie added with a laugh. "I would have liked to have gotten that one. [Michael Johnson's] 'Bluer Than Blue' was another. I would have loved to have had that song."

Ronnie was also asked if the words "member of the Country Music Hall of Fame" had really sunk in. After a long pause, Ronnie shook his head and simply said, "I don't know if it ever will." Ronnie did share that his induction was predicted years ago by producer and record executive Jerry Kennedy.

"After I won Entertainer of the Year [in 1977], I asked Jerry what was next for me," Ronnie remembered. "And he said the next thing was the Country Music Hall of Fame. I asked, 'Do you think I will get there?' And he told me that he believed I would."

Vintage photos and awards dot Ronnie's exhibit.



A plaque from his record label in Braille





Ronnie's Hall of Fame exhibit also features colorful stage wear, sunglasses with his initials, a menu from his Gatlinburg, Tenn., diner and other fascinating items.



WILD STAGE WEAR

Ronnie's flair as an entertainer was more than augmented by his flashy stage costumes, mostly crafted by iconic Las Vegas designer Harvey Krantz. Several of those pieces are displayed in the exhibit, including one of Ronnie's favorites, a coral-colored suit laden with rhinestones and flame embroidery. There's also a black suit/vest combination that Ronnie sported at the 1978 Country Music Association Awards.

Other apparel on hand ranges from a pair of sunglasses featuring Ronnie's initials, in rhinestones no less, to a pair of two-toned suede loafers. Most of the items were collected and kept over the

years by Ronnie's wife, Joyce.

Fans will also get a kick out of some unusual collectibles that add to the Milsap mystique. For instance, did you know that Ronnie once owned a music-themed restaurant in Gatlinburg, Tenn., called the Ronnie Milsap Keyboard Cafe? There's proof with the keyboard-shaped table menu sitting proudly in the exhibit. The cafe offered such delectables as Smoky Mountain Onion Rings, obviously a play off his No. 1 hit "Smoky Mountain Rain," and chips and salsa.

All told, it's a deserving tribute to an artist who likely should have been welcomed into the Country Music Hall of Fame years ago. His legacy

and importance need to be understood, says the Hall's Mick Buck.

"He is such an accomplished entertainer," Mick notes. "And he is also one of the most versatile artists we've ever had. For someone who dominated the country charts in the 1970s and '80s, he really came from an R&B, rock 'n' roll background, which all played into his sound. What's interesting, too, is that he was a huge star fairly quickly, only a couple years after he moved to Nashville. Ronnie is easily one of country's most significant artists."

You'll find that out for yourself when you visit *Ronnie Milsap: A Legend in My Time*. **CW**

[ON THE ROAD]

PARMALEE is enjoying
the simple pleasures
of touring life.

BAND OF BROS



STORY BY TRICIA DESPRES
PHOTOS BY TIMOTHY HIATT

THEY

t happens every night.

Parmalee lead singer Matt Thomas will turn the corner or look to the side of the stage, and his eyes will catch his guitar tech changing the strings on his guitar . . . a task he once spent countless hours doing himself.

And at that moment, he realizes that everything has changed.

"You never know when simple things like that are going to hit you like a ton of bricks, but they do," Matt says from the middle of a backstage room in Dekalb, Ill., where the band has a show on Brad Paisley's 2015 Country Nation World Tour. The floor is strewn with suitcases that are packed haphazardly with clothes and toothbrushes and hair gel. "It has been a struggle and a climb to get to where we are, so I hope those kinds of moments continue to happen . . . just to remind us how far we've come."

The story of how far Parmalee has come originated with a close-knit group from a small North Carolina town and continues to be strengthened as their musical career reaches heights they never imagined. Made up of brothers Matt and Scott Thomas, cousin Barry Knox and lifelong friend Josh McSwain, Parmalee is riding high on their growing tour schedule thanks to the No. 1 hit "Carolina," the No. 3 hit "Close Your Eyes" and their current single, "Already Callin' You Mine."

"I say thank you every day when my guitar tech hands me my guitar and I hear the entrance music start and I'm about to walk on that stage," adds Josh, grasping an ice-cold Busch beer. "It took us a long time to get here and to put together an amazing crew out on the road. They feel like family. Having a true team behind you out here with us seems like the next level for us as a group . . . and we are ecstatic about it."





CARDS AGAINST HUMANITY
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NAME	SCORE
1. [illegible]	100
2. [illegible]	80
3. [illegible]	60
4. [illegible]	40
5. [illegible]	20
6. [illegible]	10
7. [illegible]	0

STANDINGS

NAME	SCORE
1. [illegible]	100
2. [illegible]	80
3. [illegible]	60
4. [illegible]	40
5. [illegible]	20
6. [illegible]	10
7. [illegible]	0



billboard
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COUNTRY INDICATOR NEW AND ACTIVE

ARTIST TITLE (Weeks on chart) (Peak position)

Big & Rich *Don't Stop Believin'* (10) (1)

Brooklynn Woods *When You're Young* (10) (1)

Parakee Adams *Carlin'* (10) (1)

Joe Don Wessling *It's a Sin* (10) (1)

Free time means fun, fitness and, of course, music for the guys, who enjoy everything from a rousing game of Heads Up! to time in a nearby gym to working up new songs together. (Above) Barry also keeps an eye on their single on the charts.



PARMALEE CONTINUED

One downside of all the success is that as Parmalee's "true team" continues to grow, the capacity on their tour bus dwindles. Currently, they find themselves squeezing 11 people on the bus, all of whom bring their own distinct personalities on board.

Among the band, Barry is the messiest. Scott is the earliest riser. Josh is the late-night movie watcher. And Matt, well, he is the undisputed midnight snacker.

"I have been trying to go to bed without eating and what happens is I wake up in the middle of the night and I go to the cabinet and I make myself a half of peanut butter and jelly sandwich," explains Matt, who also says that the entire crew has been known to binge-watch their favorite cartoon, Adult Swim's *Squidbillies*.

But life on the road can still offer plenty of trials and tribulations, particularly radical shifts in the weather. "Yesterday, we were in Cancun sweating it out and today we are here where the temperature is zero," says Matt, laughing about the frigid cold outside. "I have literally had to run back and forth to my bus five times already because I keep forgetting something. That cold can really wake a guy up."

And whether it's a competitive basketball game on the courts or a sweat-inducing workout in the weight room, the hours leading up to showtime always hold something different for Parmalee. Yet the band's daily game of Heads Up!—the Ellen DeGeneres-devised guessing game for iPhone—is pretty much a given.

"It's the most convenient and funniest way to pass the time," says Josh, the self-proclaimed comedian of the group. "We laugh so hard. We have been playing it for two years now. Me and Matt tried to play it on the plane last night and it was hilarious."

And then there are always the pre- and post-show meet-and-greets, where the lines continue to grow as Parmalee continues to add to their



It's time for soundcheck. (Top, from left) Josh pulls double duty on guitar and keys, while Scott warms up on drums. (Above) Looks like Barry needs a little more bass in his monitor, and (below) Matt is finished and enjoying catering.





IT'S SHOWTIME! The fellas of Parmalee meet with fans for photos, autographs and one-on-one time before they hit the stage for a high-octane performance. And a peek at the set list reveals they've added their new single, "Already Callin' You Mine," to the show. (Opposite bottom) Matt, Josh, Barry and Scott exit the stage while Big-Head Brad photo bombs.





PARMALEE CONTINUED

already avid fan base. “We used to have five to 10 people show up for a meet-and-greet and we thought that was awesome,” says Scott, laughing. “We would think to ourselves, ‘Wow, these five to 10 people came to see *us*.’ Now with every town we go to, there is more and more showing up.”

Considering the jam-packed schedule that comes with being on tour, it can often be difficult for Parmalee to get down to the business of writing music, but they still make an effort. “You get a lot of titles while you are out on the road,” explains Barry, who has been known to stay up late to critique concert footage after a show. “You are meeting so many different people and listening to all sorts of conversations, so you end up getting a ton of song ideas. But actually sitting down and writing, while we have done it, is hard out here. In terms of getting creative, being in the studio or back home is really where it’s at.”

In fact, back home in Nashville is where Parmalee’s latest single, “Already Callin’ You Mine,” was born. Co-penned by Matt and Barry alongside songwriters Phil O’Donnell and Wade Kirby, it’s a single whose early success seems to indicate that Parmalee will be sticking around for a while. “We knew we needed an up-tempo love song and we knew we wanted to make it a positive love song about a girl,” recalls Matt. “And once we started writing, it just flew by. You write hundreds of songs and sometimes you have one like that that comes out of nowhere.”

But this time, they all agree, it feels different.

“You work so hard to prove yourself and you work so hard to make sure people connect. That’s the best part about what is happening now,” concludes Matt. “People have had the opportunity to hear us now, and now we get to carve out a fan base. It makes you want to continue moving down the road, ya know? We are doing all of this for all of them.” **CW**



BEHIND
THE SCENES

COLE
SWINDELL

CROWD PLEASER

COLE SWINDELL CALLS ON HIS FANS TO HELP WITH THE VIDEO FOR “AIN’T WORTH THE WHISKEY.”

ONE ADVANTAGE OF living in Nashville is being close by if any last-minute video shoots pop up that are in need of extras. That was definitely the case on Feb. 4 when Cole Swindell used Twitter to summon local fans to Lower Broadway’s Silver Dollar Saloon to appear in the music video for “Ain’t Worth the Whiskey.”

“Thankfully, we had some people show up and they were drinking during the day with us,” Cole told *Country Weekly* with a laugh, speaking between

takes. “It’s been fun so far! We had a pretty good start time, so that helped. With the ‘Chillin’ It’ video, we started about 4 a.m., but for this one, I didn’t have to be here until lunch. I feel like I’m moving on up!”

The Silver Dollar Saloon proved to be an ideal setting for the video’s story line, in which Cole is out with friends and encounters his ex. In line with the song’s lyrics, Cole makes it perfectly clear in the clip that he is not drinking to get her memory off his mind. Acting

the part for the video came naturally for the singer, as the song’s original inspiration stemmed from a similar situation years ago.

“This song came from a real place. It’s about real heartbreak and about that ex that did you wrong,” Cole explained of the tune, which he wrote with Adam Sanders and Josh Martin. “You may not be over it yet, but at the end of the day, you decide that my buddy who has just been overseas five times might be



Cole got some solo camera time against a beautiful backdrop of downtown Nashville; (right) Cole makes his way through the crowded bar.



worth this drink; not you.”

The shoot was also a great excuse for Cole to spend time with his real-life buddies from back home in Georgia—particularly Kyle Davis, who serves in the United States Special Forces. “The last chorus of the song talks about raising my glass to those saving our ass overseas, so having him in the video is very special,” said Cole. “It’s probably going to be my coolest one yet, just because my actual buddies are in it and it’s one of my favorite songs.”

One key scene features Cole working his way through the bar after spotting his friend Kyle, and he passes the table where his ex is sitting. Rather than getting reeled back in, Cole gives a simple shake of his head and continues on his way. “Very nice,” praised the video director, Michael Monaco of Fly Hi Films, of Cole’s performance. “You look like you’ve been there before!”

“That’s because I have,” Cole quipped back with a grin.

Cole also took advantage of the

Silver Dollar Saloon’s musical stage to capture some performance scenes with his band and the crowd of his fans who turned up, which helped put him at ease in front of the camera. “I think I love performing so much that anytime I act like I’m performing, it helps me relax,” Cole said, smiling. “Like up there today, the mic might not really be on, but I can’t get behind a microphone and not feel like I’m really onstage. It’s just so much fun to me.”

— ALANNA CONAWAY



COUNTRY GOLD

At age 85, **Leroy Van Dyke** continues to hit the road while keeping classic country alive and kicking.

STORY BY BOB PAXMAN

LEROY VAN DYKE SHOULD HAVE every reason to kick back on the couch and enjoy life as a retiree. But the 85-year-old entertainer will hear of no such idle talk (or talk about idleness), despite the fact that he's achieved remarkable career success and has earned the right to say farewell to the road.

"Retirement? I don't know what that means," says Leroy, seated in his publicist's Nashville office with wife Gladys. "It's not in my dictionary." At which point Gladys, a lady of immense good humor, chimes in with the question, "Do you know what his idea of re-

tirement is? It's when he keels over on the stage." Both Leroy and Gladys get a good chuckle out of the notion, apparently because it's all too true. "That sounds kind of cold," Gladys admits, "but that's the way he wants it to be."

Well, we should all adopt hyperactivity as a lifestyle if we can look this good at 85. Leroy still sports a full mane of hair while his face bears only a slight hint of lines or creases. He walks around on two surgically replaced knees, but otherwise, he's as healthy as the Arabian mules he and Gladys raise on their sprawling Missouri farm. "I don't know how to

sit still," Leroy concedes with a smile. "I think it's a Van Dyke degenerative disease. But that's what has kept me going all these years."

Leroy etched himself into country history with his 1961 single, "Walk On By." The single topped the charts for 19 weeks, a mark that stood for 51 years until "Cruise" by Florida Georgia Line reached its 20th week at No. 1 in 2013 (though current charts include digital airplay). Leroy's 1957 debut hit, "Auctioneer," came in at No. 9 and helped land him a film role in *What Am I Bid*, which, oddly enough, revolved around an auctioneer. He can

An early press shot of Leroy; (below, from left) Eddy Raven, Moe Bandy, Leroy Van Dyke and Jimmy Fortune on the Country Gold Tour



also boast to being the only country artist to open for Marilyn Monroe.

Leroy joined the Grand Ole Opry in 1962 and still performs on the historic stage whenever he's in Nashville. These days, he and Gladys combine to put together their biggest effort of each year, the Country Gold Tour, where Leroy and a stellar lineup of classic country artists take you on a nostalgic journey through country's

past. The guest performers range from Gene Watson, Moe Bandy and Janie Fricke to more contemporary stars like Billy Dean and Suzy Bogguss. The tour was foremost on Leroy's mind as he visited with *Country Weekly*.

GOLD STANDARD

Leroy, first of all, passes all the credit for the Country Gold Tour to Gladys, his wife of 34 years. "It's her brain-

child," he says. "She's the one who really organizes everything. Gladys makes all the phone calls and sends the e-mails and books everyone."

As might be surmised from the title, Country Gold focuses on traditional country music. It's a well-thought-out concept with very specific criteria, as Leroy explains.

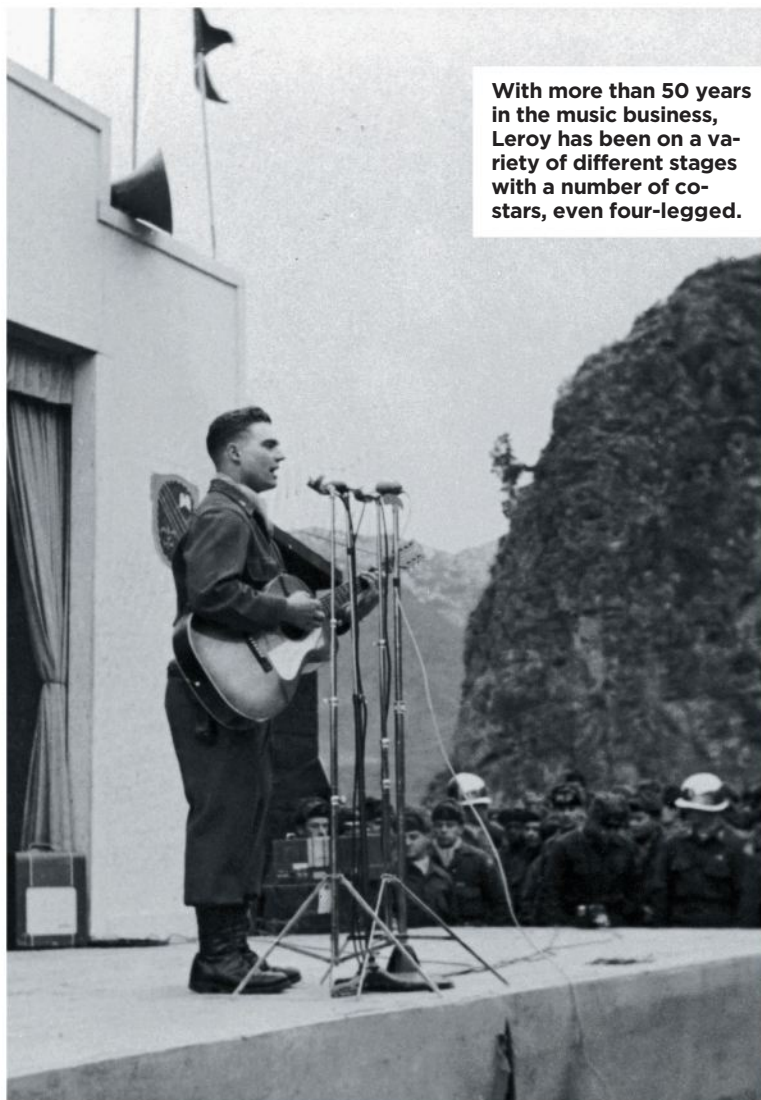
"By definition, the Country Gold Tour is made up of classic country performers who have had million-selling records or massive television exposure," he says in an almost professorial tone. "And in some cases, there is somebody who's so good that you just can't ignore them."

The ship runs smoothly and with snappy precision. Apparently, there's no such entity as "downtime" on a Country Gold show. "It all flows well because we don't change bands," Leroy notes. "I open the show and do my part and I come back and emcee the rest of it. It's never the same lineup or same package twice, unless we're doing consecutive days. Well, except for me," he adds, laughing. "I guess I'd better be on there. Of course, I have connections—I know the talent booker."

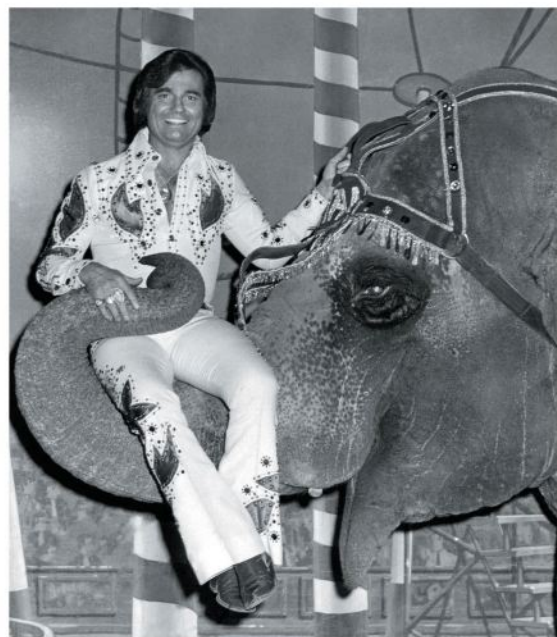
The tour serves a generally underserved market, the traditional country fans who can no longer hear their favorites over the radio airwaves. As such, it's a veritable gold mine of sorts.

"It does very well," Leroy says, smiling. "The audience is increasing little by little for this tour. We've moved from the smaller venues into the performing arts centers. It's been successful because people are hungry for this kind of entertainment. We have a good mix of performers, too. Suzy Bogguss and Billy Dean have just started coming out with us, and they are very popular with the audience. We'll keep adding to the list as time goes on."

When he's not traveling with the Country Gold Tour, Leroy still keeps his road shoes on. He plays occasional solo dates with his band, which includes son Ben, and appears on the Grand Ole Opry. "I like to play the



With more than 50 years in the music business, Leroy has been on a variety of different stages with a number of co-stars, even four-legged.



LEROY VAN DYKE CONT.
Opry Country Classics shows,” he says. “I think that’s one of the best things the Opry has done in a long time.”

TRACKING MARILYN

For all his records and accomplishments, Leroy gets asked most often about a USO gig he played in 1953 in Korea, at the height of the Korean War. He was performing for the GIs who had shown up to get a good glimpse of the main attraction—blond bombshell actress Marilyn Monroe.

“I can always say that I’m the only country act who ever opened for Marilyn Monroe,” Leroy recalls good-naturedly. “I was just in the right place at the right time.” At that point

in his life, Leroy was stationed in Korea as a special agent in the Army. A few of the top brass knew that Leroy could sing and entertain and asked him to do about 15 minutes to warm up the crowd, which was already pretty hot to see Marilyn.

“I was not in show business then,” Leroy continues. “But one of the colonels asked me if I could play a few songs. Then, Marilyn came out and sang a little bit. I did get to meet her before the show, but we didn’t speak too long because she was busy getting ready. The only thing I didn’t do right was I didn’t get somebody to take a picture of us.”

Well, imagine if cellphones had been around in the ’50s. He’d have a

treasure trove of selfies and photos among his souvenirs. But he does have vivid memories of Marilyn and her bravura outing for the troops.

“She did a good job,” Leroy will assess. “And she was a real trouper. I remember that it was snowing and very cold, but she came out in this bare-shouldered dress and I’m sure she was freezing. I know all the GIs were wearing parkas, so it had to be cold. But she walked out there and smiled for everyone and did the show.”

WALKING INTO A HIT

While stationed in Korea, Leroy wrote a song called “The Auctioneer,” inspired by his cousin Ray Sims, a real-life auctioneer himself.

B&W PHOTO COURTESY WEBSTER; OPRY PHOTO BY CHRIS HOLLO/HOLOPHOTOGRAPHICS; GRAND OLE OPRY

“Retirement? I don’t know what that means. It’s not in my dictionary.”



Leroy performed it on the show in Korea with Marilyn, and eventually released it as a single in 1957. The song, partly delivered in the rapid-fire style of an auctioneer, would be the only hit Leroy ever wrote. He once recalled that he preferred to sing songs, not write them.

In the early '60s, Leroy came across the tune that would prove the real game-changer, “Walk On By.” But on his first listen to the demo, he nearly turned thumbs down.

“The demo was horrible,” Leroy says, rather candidly. “The quality was bad and the vocal was almost worse. The singer had this kind of quivery voice, and it sounded like it was recorded in a garage. But when

it got to that chorus—*Just walk on by, wait on the corner*—I said I wanted it. Gary Walker, who was one of the writers, said it wasn’t ready because they just had one verse and part of the chorus. But I wanted it anyway.”

The song was reworked, tweaked and finally completed. Leroy released “Walk On By” in September of 1961, and the song spent its first week at the top only three weeks after it hit the charts. It stayed No. 1 for 19 weeks and handed Leroy the biggest hit of his career. In a 1994 anniversary edition of *Billboard*, the trade publication deemed “Walk On By” the most popular recording in country history.

These days, Leroy happily grants

fans’ requests for “Walk On By” and “The Auctioneer” in concert. And he’s actually a licensed auctioneer on the side. “I still do some charity auctions at the fairs and events for the FFA, things like that,” he says. “I do have my license. It’s a changing art because of technology. There are lots of things they call ‘auctions’ online, but there’s no substitute for a live auction and interacting with the audience.”

That’s what Leroy will continue to do, interact with a live audience as he sets out on the road. And there will be no stopping him.

“I just charge straight ahead,” he says. “That’s the only way I know how to do it.” **CW**

**SINGLES****BRAD PAISLEY**

“Crushin’ It”

ARISTA NASHVILLE

GRADE: B

Country music of late has begun to resemble rap music in more ways than small-town dudes feeling entitled enough to rattle off a few rhymes. Where country’s tendency toward lyrical specificity was balanced against timeless subject matter, the references in the lyrics now sometimes feel confined to that particular moment in time—always a specialty and strength of rap. Case in point: Brad Paisley’s new single, “Crushin’

It.” I’m uncertain which sportscaster first used that phrase to indicate a job well done, and I can’t help but wonder if anyone will even know what it means 25 years from now. But as the metallic crunches that bookend this song indicate, Brad has a second meaning for the phrase. His character sketch is of a perennial underachiever, seemingly incapable of excelling at anything except knocking back a few cold ones on the weekend. It’s an inebriated spiritual cousin to Billy Currington’s “Pretty Good at Drinkin’ Beer,” one that piles on Brad’s cornball sense of humor to celebrate 50 shades of mediocrity/drunkenness.

The disco-fied tempo and group-sung choruses are fitting for the jokey subject matter, and Brad as usual shows off some nifty fretwork. Overall, it doesn’t quite feel up to his typical level of clever, save for the *George freakin’ Strait* bit near the end, but it manages to wring smiles nonetheless. At any rate, it’s probably safe to assume that the folks enjoying a fourth Miller Lite from the cheap seats this summer will be singing along.

— JON FREEMAN

AT A GLANCE: “Crushin’ It” is hardly pulverizing, but it may inspire you to hoist a can in the air.

EASTON CORBIN

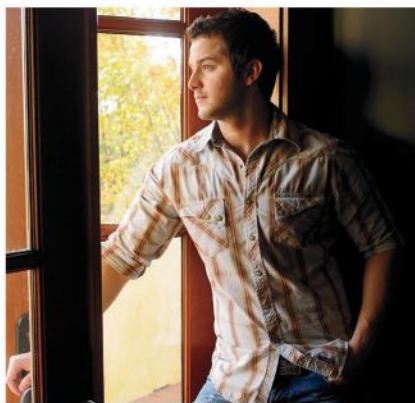
"Baby Be My Love Song"

MERCURY NASHVILLE

GRADE: **C**

With his self-titled debut album in 2010 and sophomore effort, *All Over the Road*, in 2012, Easton Corbin drew comparisons to George Strait and Alan Jackson, and for good reason. He's got an infectious baritone that hearkens back to the heyday of those traditional troubadours.

"Baby Be My Love Song" is the second single off of his upcoming album, *It's About to Get Real*, but unfortunately, neither the new single nor its predecessor, "Clockwork," are living up to the album's *Real* moniker. While Easton's vocals are as inspiring as just about anyone's in the business, "Baby Be My Love Song" is as uninspiring as its title suggests. The song is brimming with cringe-worthy lyrics like *Baby be my love song / Baby be my all night long / Be the buzz in my Dixie*



cup / My steady rockin' 'til the sun comes up and compromising instrumentation—sure, there's some steel, but there's also over-the-top electric guitar filler where there should be more steel. Is it traditional? No. Is it bro-town? No. It's like the mutt offspring of the two, and that probably won't get either side too excited.

— JIM CASEY

AT A GLANCE: Maybe the third single will be the real charm.

RASCAL FLATTS

"Riot"

BIG MACHINE RECORDS

GRADE: **A**

If scratchy, wicky-wicky guitars and rapid-fire, hip-hoppy lyrics about the latest country cliché are what you're craving, then push fast-forward. But if quintessential Rascal Flatts is what you have an appetite for, prepare to be satiated by the trio's newest single, "Riot."

The title of this tune may imply "party" or, at the very least, tempo. In reality, it's a pleading ballad, replete with piano, strings and Gary LeVox's tender tenor and gentle vibrato, which turns the plea into a palpable ache and offers a bit of subtle irony to the term "Riot." A well-written lyric from Jaron Boyer and Sara Haze gives a simple and common sentiment a unique twist as Gary, Jay DeMarcus and Joe Don Rooney add their full



band and harmonies in the verses and soar through the choruses, building to a crescendo that will leave you breathless when it drops back to just Gary's ethereal vocal, piano and strings.

Let's not keep this "Riot" quiet.

— TAMMY RAGUSA

AT A GLANCE: Songs of Anarchy? "Riot" is a delicious disturbance.



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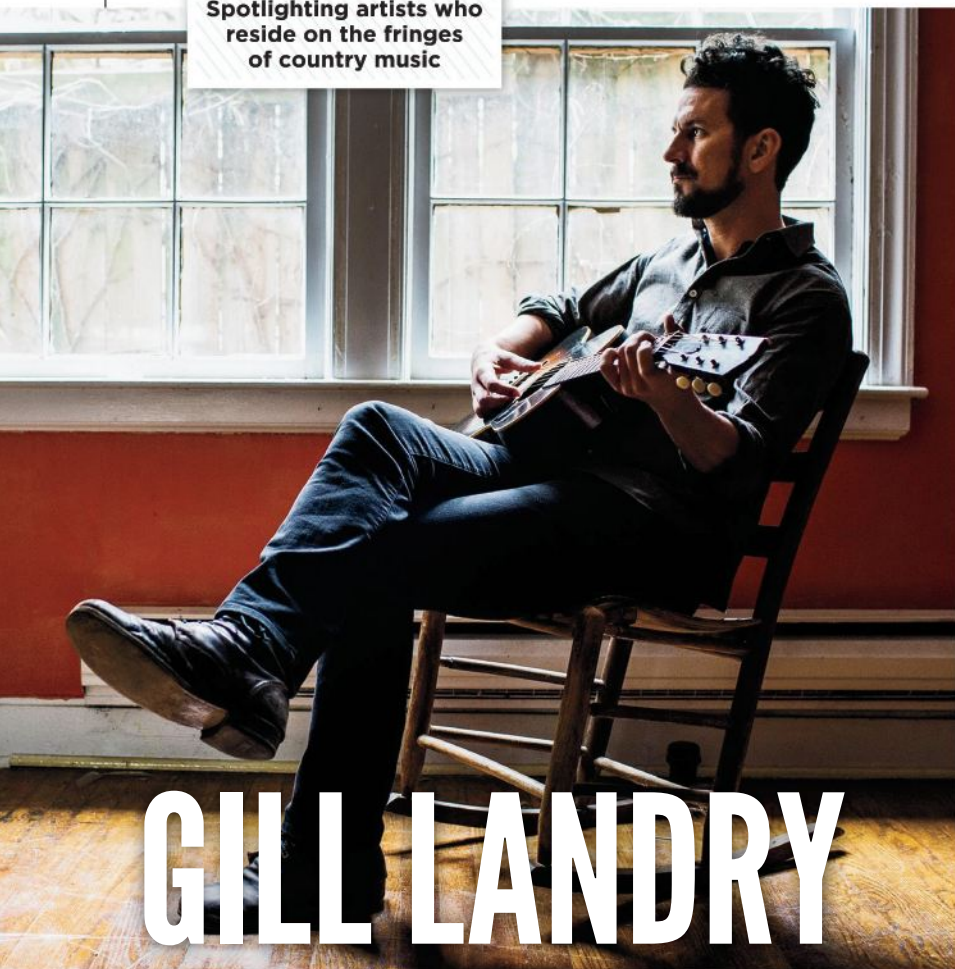


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Spotlighting artists who
reside on the fringes
of country music



GILL LANDRY

FOR FANS OF:
Bob Dylan, Tom Waits,
Leonard Cohen

IN HIS DAY JOB WITH Old Crow Medicine Show, Gill Landry helps that acclaimed group put its wild-eyed spin on old-time music. But as a solo artist, the Lake Charles, La., native is clearly a student of the classic songwriters from country, rock and pop.

Gill's self-titled third album—his first for ATO Records—is a combination of those varied influences but also the unique vision of a lifelong searcher. There isn't exactly a unifying theme on *Gill Landry*—many of the songs, like the baroque “Emily” or the Latin-tinged “Fennario,” deal with the dissolution of relationships, but others draw more impressionistic sketches of unfulfilled characters,

like the sighing, drone-heavy “Waiting for Your Love.”

“There was no preconceived concept of what the songs would be, if that makes sense,” explains Gill of writing and recording the album. “I’ve also never self-titled an album, so it seemed like a good time. As far as a solo career goes, it’s been more of a solo hobby. It was my fresh start.”

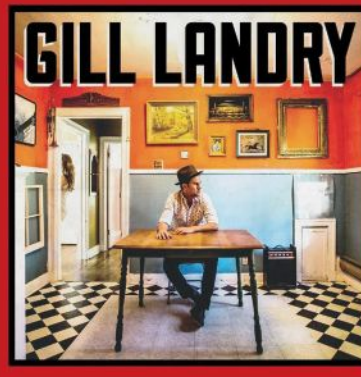
Gill previously released *The Ballad of Lawless Soirez* in 2007 and *Piety & Desire* in 2011, and had really been developing his musical style before joining up with Old Crow. Fans expecting to hear something akin to that band will likely be disappointed, as Gill’s melancholy tunes have little in common with that style of playing.

“I really just love songwriting and storytelling within songwriting on a broad spectrum,” he

ESSENTIAL LISTENING:

- “Emily”
- “Take This Body”
- “Waiting for Your Love”
- “Lately Right Now”

All songs from *Gill Landry*.
For more information,
please visit
gilllandrymusic.com.



agrees. “Yeah, I think it’s pretty obvious that it’s quite different than Old Crow. But Old Crow is seven writers writing in the vein of the traditions that it celebrates and this is more personal.”

Working without a deadline and enjoying Old Crow’s busy touring schedule, Gill was free to create and record at his own pace. Friends like Laura Marling and Robert Ellis dropped by to add their talents. This languid pace ensured that Gill was not being too deliberate about his writing. “Emily,” for example, was written in one sitting, but “Bad Love” was started and finished over a period of nearly six months.

“I have been making a living playing music and I would love to continue, but I’m not writing songs under any other persuasion than just to write the songs I want to, which, hopefully, most people are,” he says. “But I don’t feel any pressures to be anything but myself in the process and exploring the ways that interest me. There’s a bit of relaxation in that.”

— JON FREEMAN

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[STARS UP CLOSE]

→ Country Weekly readers rub elbows with their favorite stars . . .



Brad Paisley with Toppy Hux of Jonesboro, Ark.



Kacey Musgraves with Jessica Murski of Magnolia, Texas



Casey James with Emily Jones and Anna Flowers of Mount Sterling, Ill.



Love and Theft with Cassidy Beisser of Dresden, Ohio



Jay and Charlotte Farlow of Metcalf, Ga., with **Tom T. Hall**



Harri Sillankorva of Orimattila, Finland, with **Dwight Yoakam**

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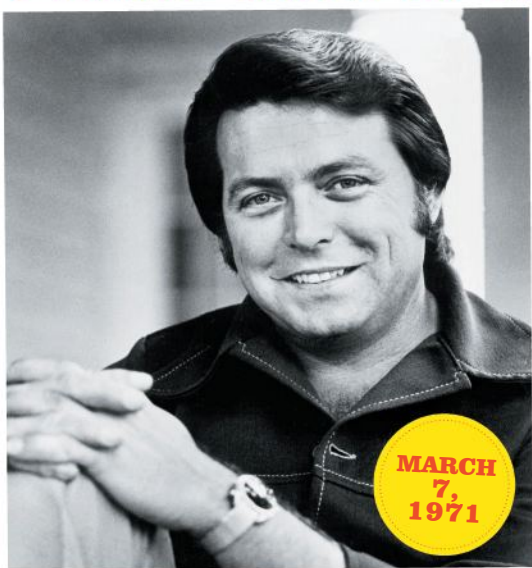
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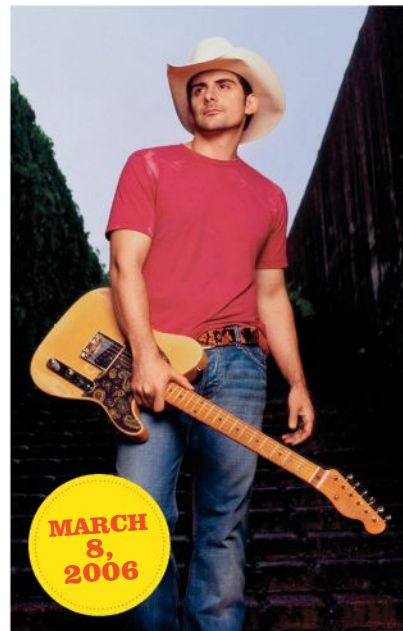
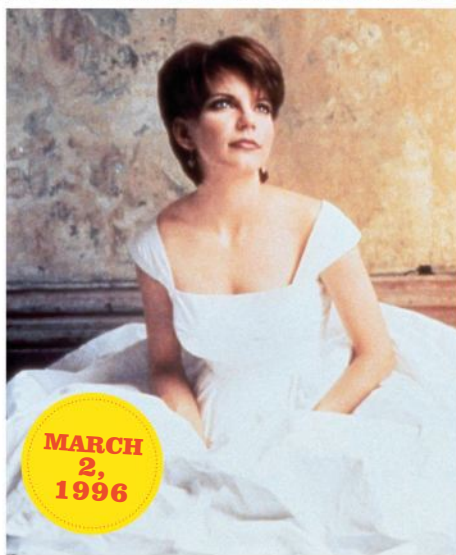
THIS WEEK IN COUNTRY



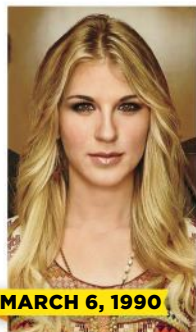
To read more on **Mickey Gilley**, go to CountryWeekly.com/magazine/vault

A tip of the cowboy hat to **MICKEY GILLEY** for being ahead of the game. A singer who could also entertain with his boogie-woogie piano stylings, Mickey decided to enter the business world by becoming part owner of a honky-tonk/bar in Pasadena, Texas, called (what else?) Gilley's. The club opened on March 7, 1971, and immediately proved a hot nightlife attraction for folks in Pasadena and nearby Houston. Gilley's became a veritable gold mine after being featured in the 1980 film *Urban Cowboy*, drawing customers from all over the globe who packed the place every night. Mickey's career also took off after opening the club, as he scored 17 chart-topping hits from 1974 to 1983.

MARTINA MCBRIDE came oh so close to getting her first No. 1 hit with her fourth career single, "My Baby Loves Me," which peaked at No. 2 in 1993. Her 10th single, "Wild Angels," proved the charm, as it reached No. 1 on March 2, 1996. "Wild Angels," written by Matraca Berg, Gary Harrison and Harry Stinson, told a story from the viewpoint of a young lady examining her relationship. She happily realizes that "wild angels" must be watching over her and her man to keep them together. The song featured a cute and clever touch, as Martina's baby daughter Delaney can be heard laughing during the intro. Martina has gone on to score four more No. 1 singles during her career.



BRAD PAISLEY led the way when the Academy of Country Music Awards nominations were announced on March 8, 2006, at the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum in Nashville. Brad garnered six nods in all, two resulting from his duet with Dolly Parton on "When I Get Where I'm Going" for Vocal Event of the Year and Video of the Year. Oddly enough, he didn't cop a nomination for the top prize, Entertainer of the Year. Coming in second with five nominations were a couple of dynamic duos, Brooks & Dunn and Sugarland, while Rascal Flatts and Carrie Underwood nabbed four apiece.



BIRTHDAYS

CLARA HENNINGSEN

is the lead vocalist for the family trio The Henningsens, which includes dad Brian and brother Aaron. Clara and husband Jacob Calaway welcomed their first child, Louie, on Feb. 14

MARCH 2, 1959
LARRY STEWART
of Restless
Heart

MARCH 3, 1971
BRETT WARREN
of The Warren
Brothers

MARCH 4, 1971
JASON SELLERS

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[CHARTS]

WEEK ENDING FEB. 21, 2015

ALBUMS



The soundtrack for *The Best of Me*, featuring Lady Antebellum, Hunter Hayes and other country acts, re-enters the chart at No. 23. It debuted at No. 11 in October.

SINGLES

"Lay Low," the lead single from Josh Turner's upcoming sixth album, co-written by Mark Nesler ("Time Is Love"), enters the Top 30 at No. 30.



Buttoned or unbuttoned? Multiple tuxedoed Thomas Rhetts give viewers plenty to ponder at No. 10.

CMT VIDEOS

THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK	TITLE/ARTIST
1	1	MONTEVALLO SAM HUNT
2	2	OLD BOOTS, NEW DIRT JASON ALDEAN
3	3	GREATEST HITS: DECADE #1 CARRIE UNDERWOOD
4	5	ANYTHING GOES FLORIDA GEORGIA LINE
5	9	THE OUTSIDERS ERIC CHURCH
6	6	MAN AGAINST MACHINE GARTH BROOKS
7	10	PLATINUM MIRANDA LAMBERT
8	7	CRASH MY PARTY LUKE BRYAN
9	4	BRINGING BACK THE SUNSHINE BLAKE SHELTON
10	13	GREATEST HITS SO FAR . . . ZAC BROWN BAND
11	11	IGNITE THE NIGHT CHASE RICE
12	14	THE COWBOY RIDES AWAY: LIVE FROM AT&T STADIUM • GEORGE STRAIT
13	12	JUST AS I AM BRANTLEY GILBERT
14	26	RISER DIERKS BENTLEY
15	18	PAIN KILLER LITTLE BIG TOWN
16	15	I DON'T DANCE LEE BRICE
17	19	THE BIG REVIVAL KENNY CHESNEY
18	8	METAMODERN SOUNDS IN COUNTRY MUSIC STURGILL SIMPSON
19	16	RALPH STANLEY & FRIENDS: MAN OF CONSTANT SORROW • RALPH STANLEY
20	23	COLE SWINDELL COLE SWINDELL
21	24	SUNDOWN HEAVEN TOWN TIM MCGRAW
22	25	747 LADY ANTEBELLUM
23	—	THE BEST OF ME SOUNDTRACK
24	27	IT GOES LIKE THIS THOMAS RHETT
25	17	BRING YOU BACK BRETT ELDRIDGE

THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK	TITLE/ARTIST
1	1	I SEE YOU LUKE BRYAN
2	3	SUN DAZE FLORIDA GEORGIA LINE
3	4	MAKE ME WANNA THOMAS RHETT
4	6	LONELY TONIGHT BLAKE SHELTON FEAT. ASHLEY MONROE
5	5	LIKE A COWBOY RANDY HOUSER
6	7	JUST GETTIN' STARTED JASON ALDEAN
7	2	TALLADEGA ERIC CHURCH
8	9	MEAN TO ME BRETT ELDRIDGE
9	10	TAKE IT ON BACK CHASE BRYANT
10	11	HOMEGROWN HONEY DARIUS RUCKER
11	12	LONELY EYES CHRIS YOUNG
12	14	DRINKING CLASS LEE BRICE
13	15	AIN'T WORTH THE WHISKEY COLE SWINDELL
14	19	HOMEGROWN ZAC BROWN BAND
15	8	SOMETHING IN THE WATER CARRIE UNDERWOOD
16	17	WHAT WE AIN'T GOT JAKE OWEN
17	18	SAY YOU DO DIERKS BENTLEY
18	16	FREESTYLE LADY ANTEBELLUM
19	20	TAKE YOUR TIME SAM HUNT
20	21	A GUY WALKS INTO A BAR TYLER FARR
21	22	SMOKE A THOUSAND HORSES
22	23	TRAILER HITCH KRISTIAN BUSH
23	24	SHE DON'T LOVE YOU ERIC PASLAY
24	28	RAISE 'EM UP KEITH URBAN FEATURING ERIC CHURCH
25	25	LITTLE RED WAGON MIRANDA LAMBERT
26	27	DON'T IT BILLY CURRINGTON
27	26	BABY BE MY LOVE SONG EASTON CORBIN
28	30	HARD TO BE COOL JOE NICHOLS
29	29	DRUNK AMERICANS TOBY KEITH
30	34	LAY LOW JOSH TURNER

THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK	TITLE/ARTIST
1	4	SOMETHING IN THE WATER CARRIE UNDERWOOD
2	2	TALLADEGA ERIC CHURCH
3	3	TIL IT'S GONE KENNY CHESNEY
4	5	SUN DAZE FLORIDA GEORGIA LINE
5	6	LONELY TONIGHT • BLAKE SHELTON FEAT. ASHLEY MONROE
6	7	LIKE A COWBOY RANDY HOUSER
7	11	JUST GETTIN' STARTED JASON ALDEAN
8	9	MEAN TO ME BRETT ELDRIDGE
9	10	HOMEGROWN HONEY DARIUS RUCKER
10	13	MAKE ME WANNA THOMAS RHETT

SOURCE: CMT



Billy Currington's video for "Don't It," directed by Peter Zavadil (who's also behind the No. 3 clip), hits No. 9.

GAC VIDEOS

THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK	TITLE/ARTIST
1	1	LONELY TONIGHT • BLAKE SHELTON FEAT. ASHLEY MONROE
2	2	SOMETHING IN THE WATER CARRIE UNDERWOOD
3	7	TALLADEGA ERIC CHURCH
4	4	PERFECT STORM BRAD PAISLEY
5	3	SHOTGUN RIDER TIM MCGRAW
6	5	LONELY EYES CHRIS YOUNG
7	8	LAY LOW JOSH TURNER
8	6	GENTLE ON MY MIND THE BAND PERRY
9	17	DON'T IT BILLY CURRINGTON
10	14	DRINKING CLASS LEE BRICE

SOURCE: GAC

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WHO SAYS?

“I’m a really, really optimistic and really, really positive person. My main thing is ‘Enjoy life. Celebrate life.’”



B JAKE OWEN

A LUKE BRYAN

C DARIUS RUCKER

ANSWER: A

COUNTRY WEEKLY

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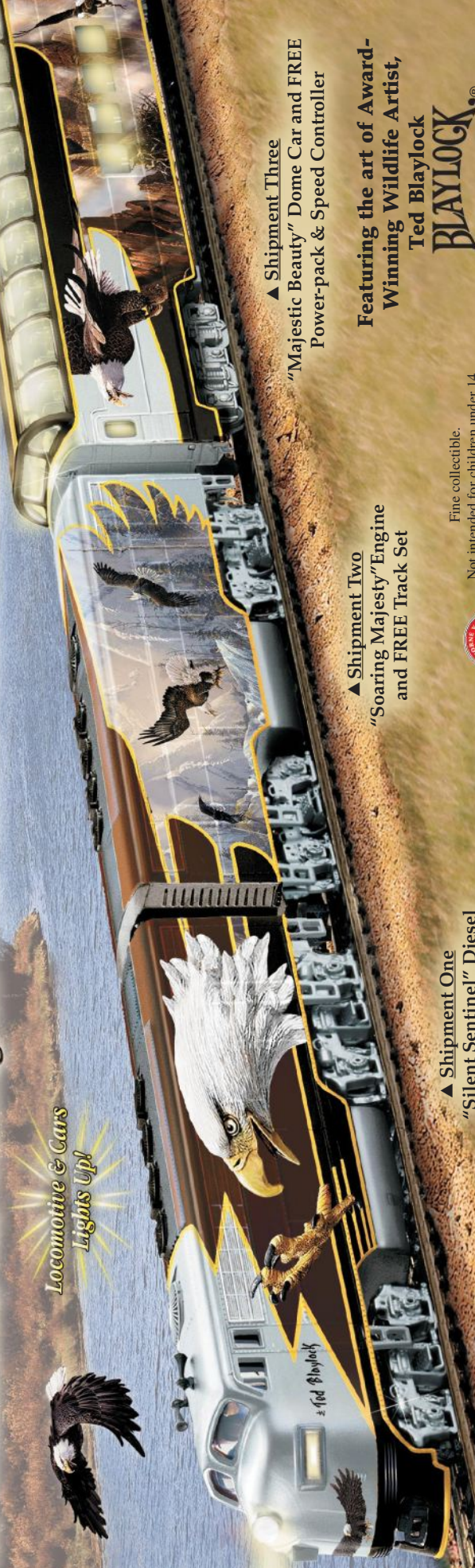
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I like it when . . .

The song comes easy.

My favorite color is . . .

Brown.

If I could change one thing about myself it would be . . .

My inability to sleep.

I would love to do a duet with . . .

Merle Haggard.

A guy can never have too many . . .

Guitars.

I can't live without . . .

Mitchell's Deli.

I wish I were . . .

A little bit taller. I wish I was a baller, I wish I had a girl that looked good—I could call her. And a rabbit in a hat with a bat and a '64 Impala.

My favorite TV show is . . .

The Walking Dead.

The one word that describes my day today is . . .

Sloooooow-moving.

The first thing I do in the morning is . . .

Wake up.

If I could be anyone for a day it would be . . .

Chris Gaines. →

Music is . . .

Still the best way to touch someone's innermost emotions.

I think that _____ sucks.

Being negative.



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